ARROWSMITH

di Kurt Busiek e Carlos Pacheko

WildStorm - CliffHanger

2003 / 2004

Paris, Gallia. Forty miles from the front.
September 1914
MA FOI, MA FOI -- THE CANNONS! THE PRUSSIANS WILL--
-- OUF!
QU'EST-CE --?
LUTHER! LUTHER! OUT OF THE LADY'S PATH, IDIOT! VITE! VITE!
PARDON, MADEMOISELLE. THE SOLDAT-ZOMBI...
AH--!
ALL THESE SOLDIERS -- OFFICERS, NON-HUMANS, NIGHT-CREATURES!
THE PRUSSIANS MUST BE CLOSE -- THEY'LL TAKE THE CITY -- MURDER US ALL --
MADEMOISELLE, MADEMOISELLE -- CALM YOURSELF!
THE PRUSSIANS ARE WELL AWAY STILL, AND THERE'S NO IMMEDIATE DANGER. NONE. LOOK TO THE ROOFTOPS--
-- AND SEE? THE GARGOYLES ARE STILL HERE. OH, THE NOISE MAKES THEM NERVOUS, BUT IF THE FIGHTING DREW TOO CLOSE, THEY'D FLEE.
BUT NO, AS LONG AS OUR ROOFTOPS AND SKIES ARE ALIVE --
CHRT
CHRRR

A Prelude
THE SOUND OF DISTANT GUNS
by KURT & CARLOS BUSIEK PACHECO
In Association with the Prodigious Talents of:
Inker JESUS MERINO
Colorist ALEX SINCLAIR
Letterers RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT's WES ABBOTT
Assistant Editor KRISTY QUINN
Editor SCOTT DUNBIER
• LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS Alternity Consultant •
-- YOU MAY TRUST THAT PARIS IS STILL FREE!
ACADEMIE MILITAIRE
NOK N--
ECOLE DE SORCELLERIE EXPERIMENTALE créée en 1911
ORDERLY!
CONFOUND IT -- LAURENT! WHERE IS THAT USELESS...?
Out Soon - A New Entertainment for the Year Two-thousand-and-three -
Arrowsmith
from Cliffhanger of La Jolla

AH! THERE YOU ARE!
YES, MAGISTER BOISROND? WHAT DO YOU NEED...?

NEED?
I WANT THE NIGHTLY PROGRESS REPORT! AND I WANT IT IMMEDIATELY!
O-OF COURSE, SIR. EVERYTHING IS PREPARED.
YOU'LL JUST COME TO THE COURTYARD...?

WE HAVE BEEN CONJURING THE HOMUNCULI FOR THE DEMONSTRATIONS, SIR.
THE THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS HAVE IMPROVED ON THEM. VERY LIFE-LIKE, I THINK YOU'LL...
YES, YES, I'M SURE.
WHAT'S FIRST, LAURENT?

THE SILICUS CANNON, SIR.
WE'VE BEEN MAKING REAL STRIDES WITH IT, LATELY.
FIRE!

I SEE, I SEE. GLASS, ALL OF THEM. IMPRESSIVE.
AND THE CURRENT SUCCESS RATE?
WE HAVE IT UP TO 68%, SIR.

OH WE DO, DO WE?
SO WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME, WITH A HINT OF ACTUAL PRIDE IN YOUR VOICE, IS THAT WE HAVE A WEAPON THAT FAILS TO WORK ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF THE TIME?
WE... WE'RE WORKING ON IMPROVING THAT, SIR.
IT'S NOT THE CHARGES -- THEY'RE BEING MADE STRICTLY TO YOUR FORMULA. IT'S A MATTER OF THE RIGHT RITUALS FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF THE SHELLS...

SIGHE SHOW ME THE SPELLS THIS EVENING.
WHAT NEXT?
THESE NEXT TWO AREN'T AS FAR ALONG, SIR. WE'VE BEEN IMPROVING THE BANESHIELD'S RESISTANCE TO MAGICAL ATTACKS.
IT IS QUITE EFFECTIVE AGAINST VAMPIRIC ASSAULT, BUT...

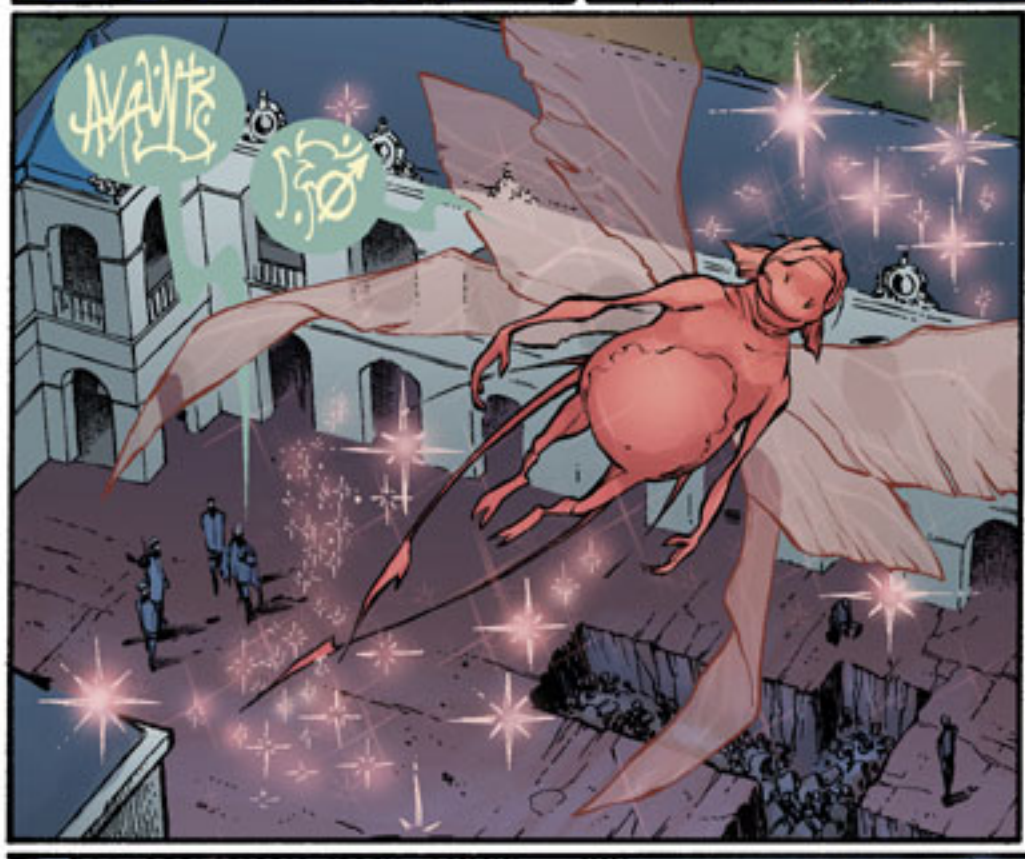
FROOM
AA
HH
IH

I... SEE.
THIS IS STILL PRELIMINARY. WE WANT A WAY TO SEND MESSAGES FROM THE TRENCHES MYSTICALLY, INSTANTLY. IT WORKS, BUT...
...WHEN WE SIMULATE THE MAGICAL INTERFERENCE THE PRUSSIANS CAST, WELL...
...THERE ARE PROBLEMS.

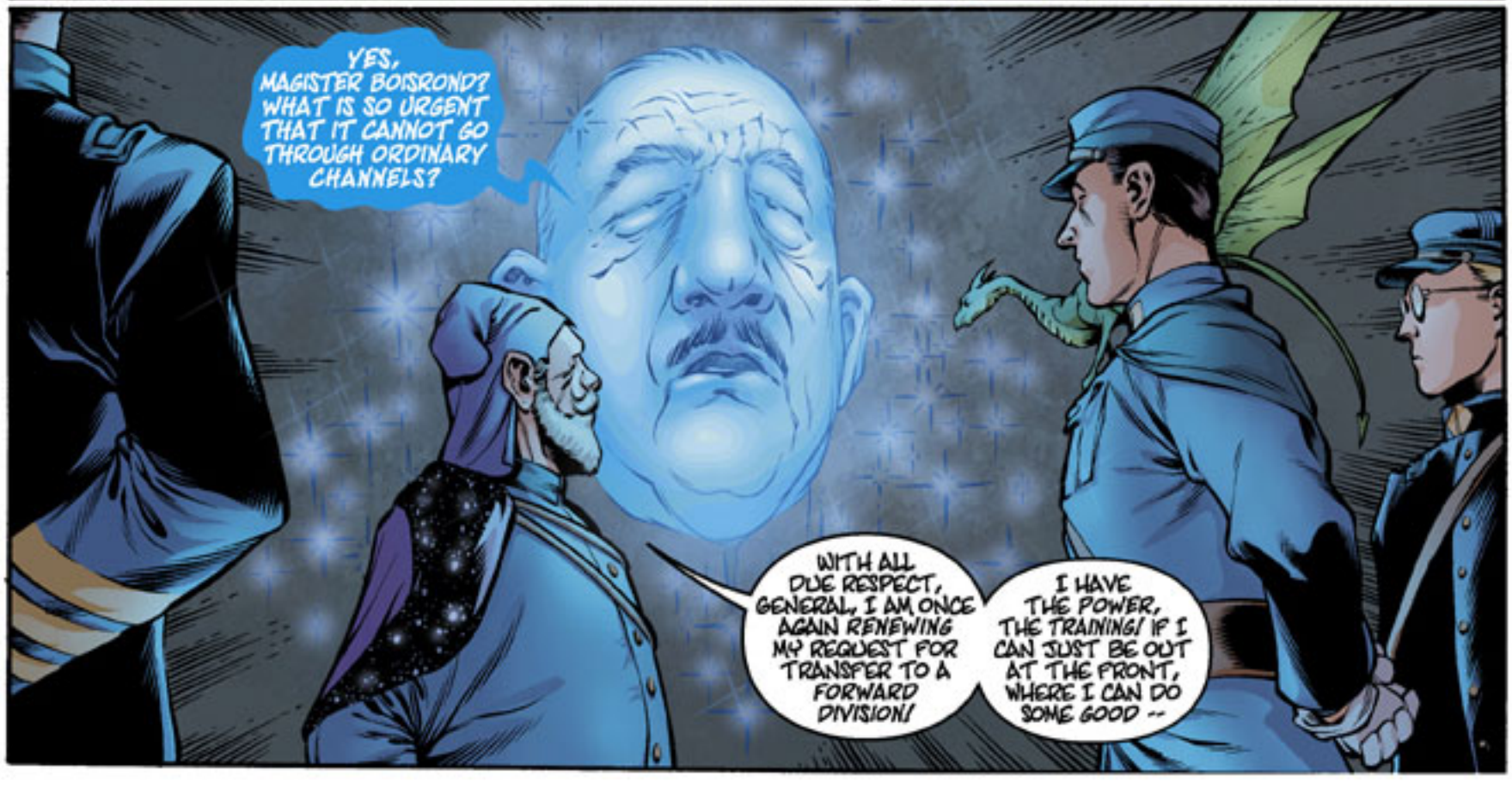
AAA
IH
IH

EXCUSE ME, MAGISTER!
URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE MARSHALL'S OFFICE. JUST NOW ARRIVED, SIR.
HMP. WELL, IT CAN'T BE WORSE THAN THIS FARCE. HAND IT OVER, HAND IT OVER.

DIABLE! PAR LES SEPT DIABLES!
THIS IS INTOLERABLE! INTOLERABLE!



AH...AND WILL THERE BE A REPLY?
I HAVE JUST SENT IT.
I SHOULD HEAR FROM THE RECIPIENT MOMENTAR--


YES, MAGISTER BOISROND? WHAT IS SO URGENT THAT IT CANNOT GO THROUGH ORDINARY CHANNELS?
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, GENERAL, I AM ONCE AGAIN RENEWING MY REQUEST FOR TRANSFER TO A FORWARD DIVISION!
I HAVE THE POWER, THE TRAINING! IF I CAN JUST BE OUT AT THE FRONT, WHERE I CAN DO SOME GOOD --

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE THIS LEADS?

THIS IS WHERE IT LEADS!

LOOK AT THEM, PHILLIPE!

THEY ARE THE LEGACY OF WHAT WE DO HERE! THEY ARE THE ONES WHO DEPEND ON OUR SORCEROUS NONSENSE --

-- THE ONES WE FAIL!

I KNOW. BUT YOU STILL CANNOT BE RISKED.
AND THE ENEMY IS IN THE SAME STRAITS, AFTER ALL.
PLUS, YOU HAVE COME UP WITH QUITE A BIT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY -- MASS-MANUFACTURED SPELLS, NEW APPLICATIONS --
AND WHO WILL USE THEM, PHILLIPE?
WHEN THE FLOWER OF GALLIC YOUTH LIES DEAD IN THE MUD, WITH A GENERATION OF LOTHARINGIANS AND ALBIONESE NEXT TO THEM, WHO WILL YOU SEND?
WHO WILL BE HANDED A FEW FAULTY WEAPONS, SOME CHARMS AND TRINKETS, AND SENT TO DIE NEXT?
WHO? WHO?!
Herbertsville, Connecticut.
The shores of Lake Erie.
The United States of Columbia.
HEY! NICE CATCH THERE, FLETCH!
AW, IT'S NOTHING MUCH, OL' BUDDY OL' PAL --
-- IT'S JUST EASY WHEN YOU KNOW HOW...
Continued July 16th, at Finer Establishments Worldwide.
Arrowsmith #1
Well Worth a Look!

BUSIEK & PACHECO

Arrowsmith™

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Near Compiègne, Gallia.

March 1915.

... MOI, C'EST LA BOUE. SI SEULEMENT J'AVAIS LES PIEDS AU SEC...

C'EST PAS LA BOUE, C'EST LE FROID.

NON, NON... CE SONT LES POUX. LE RESTE, JE PEUX SUPPORTER, MAIS...

VOUS N'ÊTES QUE DES IDIOTS.

LE PIRE, C'EST LES GÉNÉRAUX. ILS DORMENT AU CHAUD EUX, AU SEC, AU PROPRE, MAIS S'ILS AVAIENT UN PEU DE JUGEOTE, NOUS NE SERIONS PAS... HM?

PSST, RÉMY.

HM? OH.

OH!

REGARDEZ! ELLES SONT SI BELLES, SI FINES. SI...

QUE SE...?

DES ESPRITS?!

IMBÉCILE! C'EST LA MAGIE QUI LES ATTIRE! S'ILS SONT LÀ C'EST QUE -- C'EST QUE --

LES BOCHES! VITE, LES GARS -- AUX ARMES! UTILISEZ LES PRANA-CHARGES --
L'ENNEMI ATTAQUE!
L'ENNEMI ATTAQUE!
HRAC HAA
PRAM PAM PAM PRAM PAM
UN MAGE! IL NOUS FAUT UN MAGE, ICI! CONTENEZ-LES -- TENEZ BON LES GARS --
PAM
-- JE CONTACTE LE POSTE DE COMMANDEMENT!
BON DIEU -- BON DIEU --

AH!
MESSAGE AU COMMANDEMENT! SECTION 17-A! LES BOCHES ATTAQUENT-- ILS ONT UN OGRE DES MONTAGNES!
ENVOLE-TOI! FILE! RAMÈNE DES RENFORTS, VITE -- OU NOUS SOMMES MORTS!
HAH!
AAAAA!
PKAM
PKAM
PKAM
PKAM
PKAM
ENGHE
AAAAAA!
KAM

PKAM
HH!
SHREEEEEEEEE
DANS LA BRÈCHE, LES GARS! REPOUSSEZ-LES -- REPOUSSEZ-LES! VOS CAMARADES ONT BESOIN DE VOTRE AIDE! LES PRUSSIENS DOIVENT ÊTRE --
-- SEIGNEUR!
HRUHH
AAAAA!
AAAAA!
AAAAA
AAAAA

Herbertsville, Connecticut.
On the shores of Lake Erie.
April 1915.

LOOK! LOOK!
GENERAL STORE

OVER THE LIVERY STABLES! LOOK!
THERE THEY ARE!

Cliffhanger presents:

Arrowsmith

Chapter One:

So Smart in Their Fine Uniforms...

by Kurt & Carlos Busiek Pacheco
Inks by Jesús Merino Color Art by Alex Sinclair
Lettering Richard Starkings & Comicraft
Alternity Consultant Lawrence Watt-Evans
Assistant Editor Kristy Quinn Editor Scott Dunbier

SMAX #1

IN STORES AUGUST 20TH

As far back as anyone can remember, people have escaped from the real world with fantasy stories. Well, in this modern world that we live in--what with war, anarchy, and pestilence--we can't retreat into just ANY fantasy world; one wouldn't nearly be enough! We need to retreat into every fantasy world we can think of, all at once!

In a new 5-issue miniseries, Jeff Smax, the emotionally-unavailable blue tough guy from Top 10, has to leave the anything-but-mundane city of Neopolis and return to his homeworld for his uncle's funeral. If you thought Neopolis was full of superheroes, guess how many knights, barbarians, princesses, elves, dwarves, dragons, ogres, magic rings, singing swords, enchanted castles, and wise anthropomorphic animals you'll find in the pages of SMAX...

I'm thrilled to be drawing the adventures of Jeff Smax and Robyn "Toybox" Slinger. It's just what ABC needed to round itself out: a mighty fantasy epic, as only the legendary Alan Moore can provide!

Zander Cannon

SMAX is definitely going to turn some heads! And if you're in the hunt for some other good reads, check out these trade paperbacks on-sale in August: MAXX BOOK 1 (8/6), GEN13: SEPTEMBER SONG (8/13), WILDCATS VERSION 3.0: BRAND BUILDING (8/20), AND EPICURUS THE SAGE (8/27)...One book for every week of the month! It's gonna be one HOT summer!

WILDSTORM

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The Authority #3

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Eye Of The Storm Annual #1

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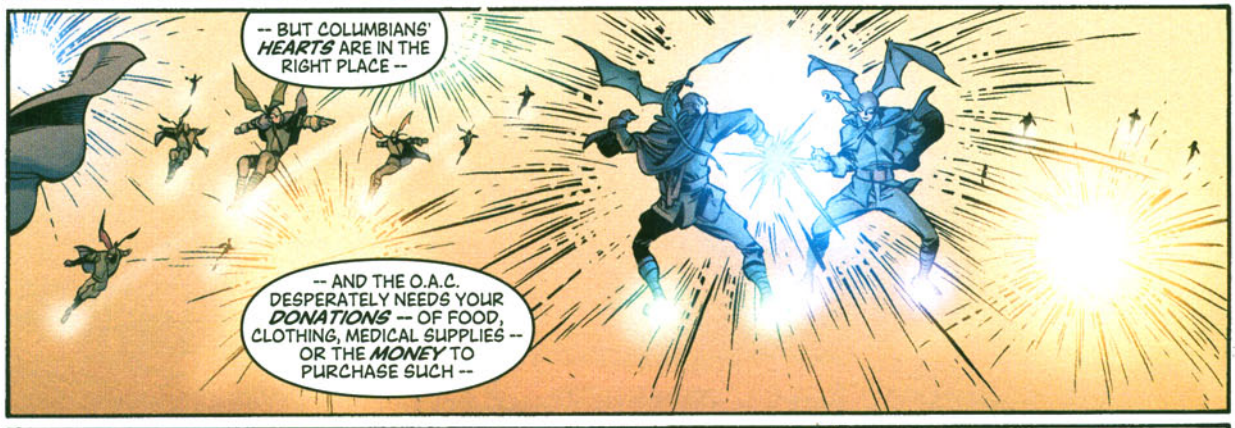
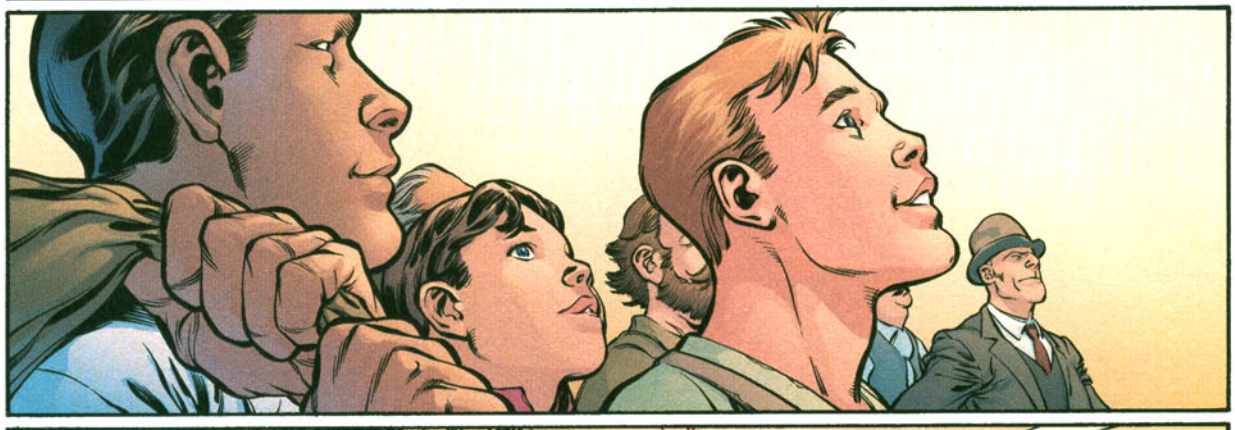
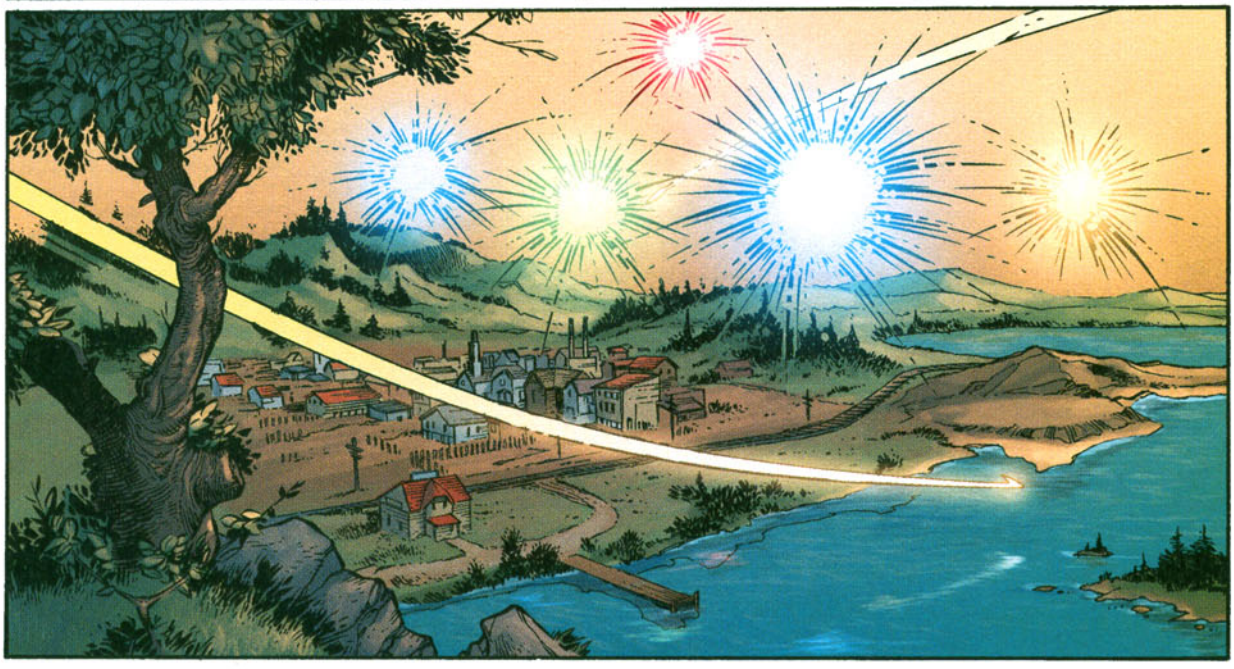
BUT THESE BRAVE MEN CANNOT FIGHT ALONE!
ALL THEIR SKILL, ALL THEIR DARING -- IT COMES TO NOTHING WITHOUT THE SUPPORT TO KEEP FIGHTING!
THE UNITED STATES OF COLUMBIA IS NOT IN THE WAR, NOT YET --


-- BUT COLUMBIANS' HEARTS ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE --
-- AND THE O.A.C. DESPERATELY NEEDS YOUR DONATIONS -- OF FOOD, CLOTHING, MEDICAL SUPPLIES -- OR THE MONEY TO PURCHASE SUCH --





TAKE A HAND IN VICTORY!
Wake Up Columbia!
e Overseas Air Corps
eeds Your Support!
FLETCH?
C'MON, FLETCHER, IT'S GETTING LATE. YOUR DAD'LL SKIN YOU ALIVE IF --
YOU GO ON AHEAD. I'LL CATCH UP IN A MINUTE.

YOU CALL THAT FLYING?
WHAT? YOU RUSHED THE FORMATION, THEO --
NOW, NOW, DON'T PUT IT ON ME THAT YOU CAN'T KEEP UP --
HM?

-- STARVED, I COULD EAT A --
HERBERT HOTEL. THEY SAY IT'S THE BEST IN TOWN --
-- ONLY ONE IN TOWN --
-- NOT MUCH OF A CROWD, WON'T BE SEEING MUCH --
-- CLOSER TO CHICAGO AND THE PORT CITIES OF NORTH VIRGINIA, THERE'LL BE MORE --
COME ON, YOU LOT. TALKING ME TO SLEEP, YOU ARE...

HEY!
HEY, MISTER --
-- REAL DRAGON?

MISTER, C'N I GETCHER SIGNATURE?
SURE, IF YOU WANT IT...
CAREFUL NOW -- HE MAY BE SMALL, BUT HE'S NOT TAME --
-- TOUCH HIM?
-- KILLED ANY PRUSSIANS?

UH... EXCUSE ME?
I JUST, UH... WANTED TO ASK... UH...DO YOU KNOW LUFBERY?

HM?
YES, WE ALL DO. A SOUR MAN, BUT A HAWK IN THE AIR. COMPLETELY AT HOME THERE. AND A RARE MARKSMAN.
NOW IF YOU'LL ALL EXCUSE US, WE MUST --

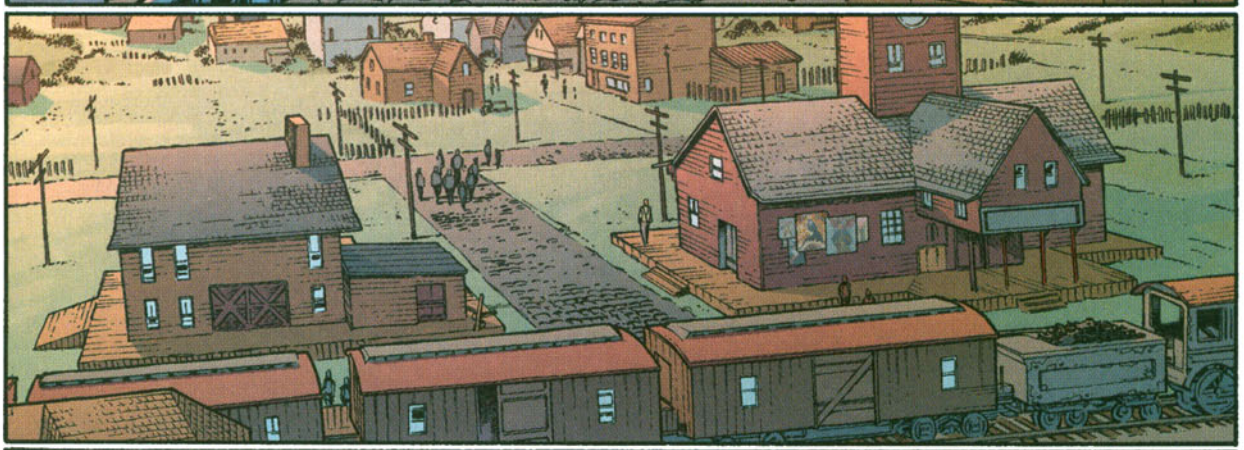
HOLD UP, HOLD UP. NO NEED TO BE IN SUCH A RUSH.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, SON?

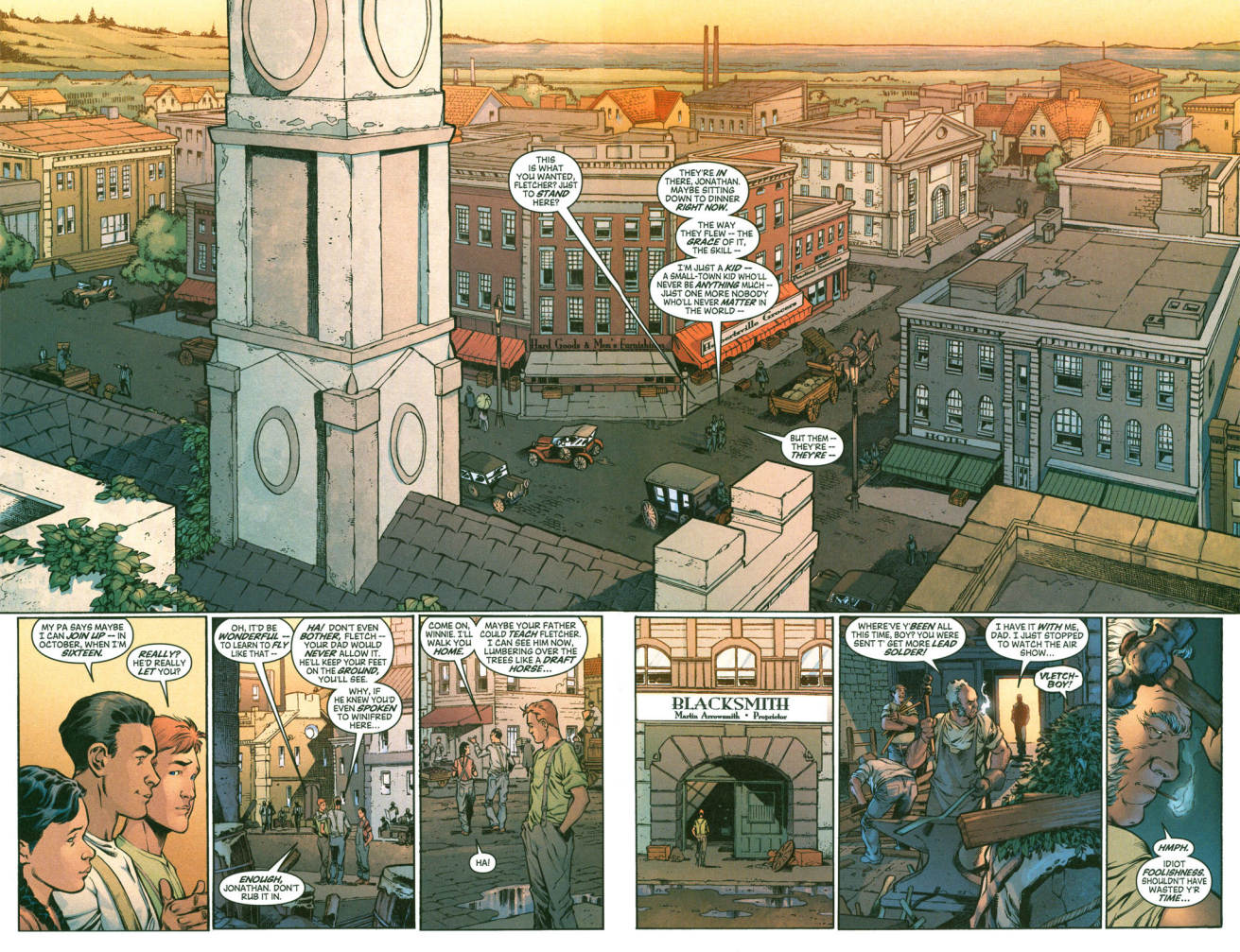
UH, FLETCHER. FLETCHER ARROWSMITH, SIR.
AND YOU'VE HEARD OF LUFBERY. ARE YOU QUICK? GOOD EYESIGHT, GOOD AT CATCH?
I... I GUESS SO. SIR.

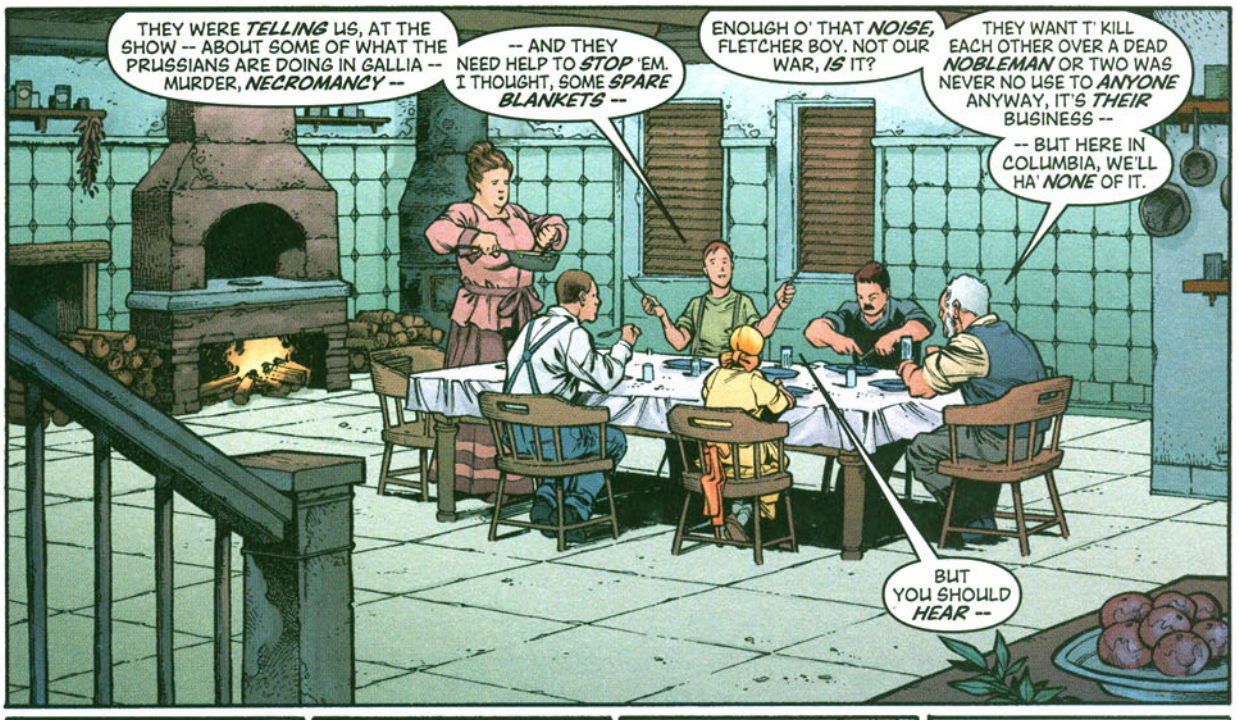
WHAT'S THIS, BONNIE?
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THE GAULS NEED HELP, SON. THEY DESPERATELY NEED MEN, PARTICULARLY AIRMEN. THE PRUSSIANS DO HORRIBLE THINGS --
-- RAPE, MURDER --
-- THEY USE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN IN THEIR NECROMANCIES --

BONNIE, CUT IT OUT. HE'S JUST A KID.
HE DOESN'T WANT THIS, HE'S NOT READY. RECRUIT SOMEONE ELSE.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.

WE TRAIN QUALIFIED CANDIDATES, FLETCHER ARROWSMITH -- TEACH THEM THE MAGIC SPELLS THAT LET THEM FLY.
THINK ABOUT IT. MAYBE LOOK US UP IN A COUPLE OF YEARS.
AND TELL YOUR PARENTS -- WE'D APPRECIATE THEIR DONATIONS!



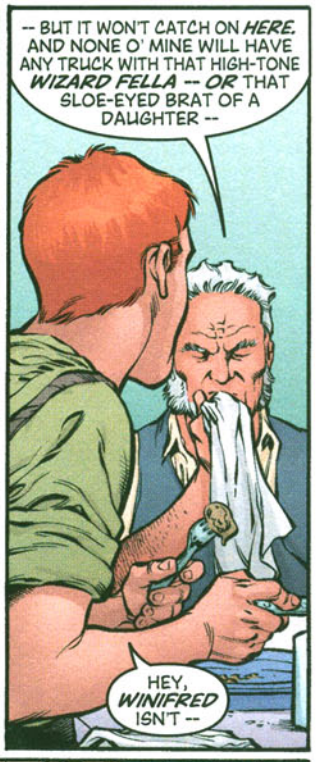

THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED, FLETCHER? JUST TO *STAND* HERE?
THEY'RE *IN* THERE, JONATHAN. MAYBE SITTING DOWN TO DINNER *RIGHT NOW.*
THE WAY THEY FLEW -- THE *GRACE* OF IT, THE SKILL --
I'M JUST A *KID* -- A SMALL-TOWN KID WHO'LL NEVER BE *ANYTHING* MUCH -- JUST ONE MORE NOBODY WHO'LL NEVER *MATTER* IN THE WORLD --
BUT THEM -- THEY'RE -- *THEY'RE* --
Hard Goods & Men's Furnishings
MY PA SAYS MAYBE I CAN *JOIN UP* -- IN OCTOBER, WHEN I'M *SIXTEEN.*
REALLY? HE'D REALLY *LET* YOU?
OH, IT'D BE *WONDERFUL* -- TO LEARN TO *FLY* LIKE THAT --
HA! DON'T EVEN *BOTHER,* FLETCH -- YOUR DAD WOULD *NEVER* ALLOW IT. HE'LL KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE *GROUND,* YOU'LL SEE.
WHY, IF HE KNEW YOU'D EVEN *SPOKEN* TO WINIFRED HERE...
ENOUGH, JONATHAN. DON'T RUB IT IN.
COME ON, WINNIE. I'LL WALK YOU *HOME.*
MAYBE YOUR FATHER COULD *TEACH* FLETCHER. I CAN SEE HIM NOW, LUMBERING OVER THE TREES LIKE A *DRAFT HORSE...*
HA!
BLACKSMITH
Martin Arrowsmith • Proprietor
WHERE'VE Y'*BEEN* ALL THIS TIME, BOY? YOU WERE SENT'T GET MORE *LEAD SOLDER!*
I HAVE IT *WITH* ME, DAD. I JUST STOPPED TO WATCH THE AIR SHOW...
VLETCH-BOY!
HMPH.
IDIOT *FOOLISHNESS.* SHOULDN'T HAVE WASTED Y'R *TIME...*

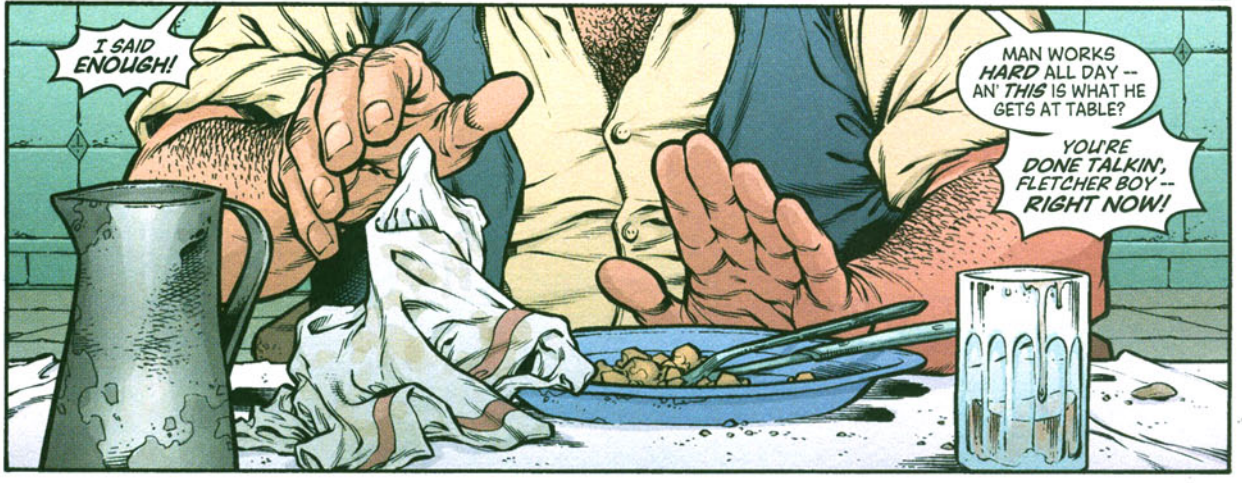

THEY WERE TELLING US, AT THE SHOW -- ABOUT SOME OF WHAT THE PRUSSIANS ARE DOING IN GALLIA -- MURDER, NECROMANCY --
-- AND THEY NEED HELP TO STOP 'EM. I THOUGHT, SOME SPARE BLANKETS --
ENOUGH O' THAT NOISE, FLETCHER BOY. NOT OUR WAR, IS IT?
THEY WANT T' KILL EACH OTHER OVER A DEAD NOBLEMAN OR TWO WAS NEVER NO USE TO ANYONE ANYWAY, IT'S THEIR BUSINESS --
-- BUT HERE IN COLUMBIA, WE'LL HA' NONE OF IT.
BUT YOU SHOULD HEAR --

AND THIS FLYIN' NONSENSE -- EVEN MORE FOOLISHNESS. WHAT'S IT MAKE THAT A MAN COULD EAT, OR USE, OR SELL?
NOTHIN', THAT'S WHAT!
'S A REASON MAGIC DON'T WORK AROUND COLD IRON -- IT'S UNNATURAL. NOTHIN' SENSIBLE MEN SHOULD PUT THEIR TRUST IN.

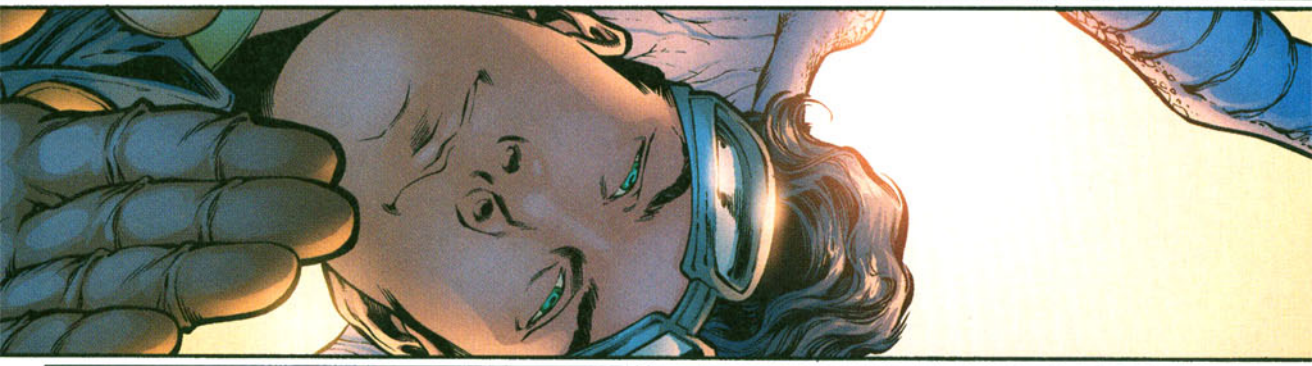
LOTS OF PEOPLE USE MAGIC NOWADAYS -- FERTILIZING FIELDS, CURING SICKNESSES, MANUFACTURING...
A PACK O' LIES!

THEY'RE JUST PUTTIN' GOOD MEN OUTTA WORK WITH THESE "MIRACLE METHODS." THEY'LL SEE, WHEN IT BACKFIRES ON 'EM.
BUT --
MARK MY WORDS -- THIS NEW COMMERCIAL WIZARDRY MAY BE ALL TH' RAGE IN THE BIG CITIES --

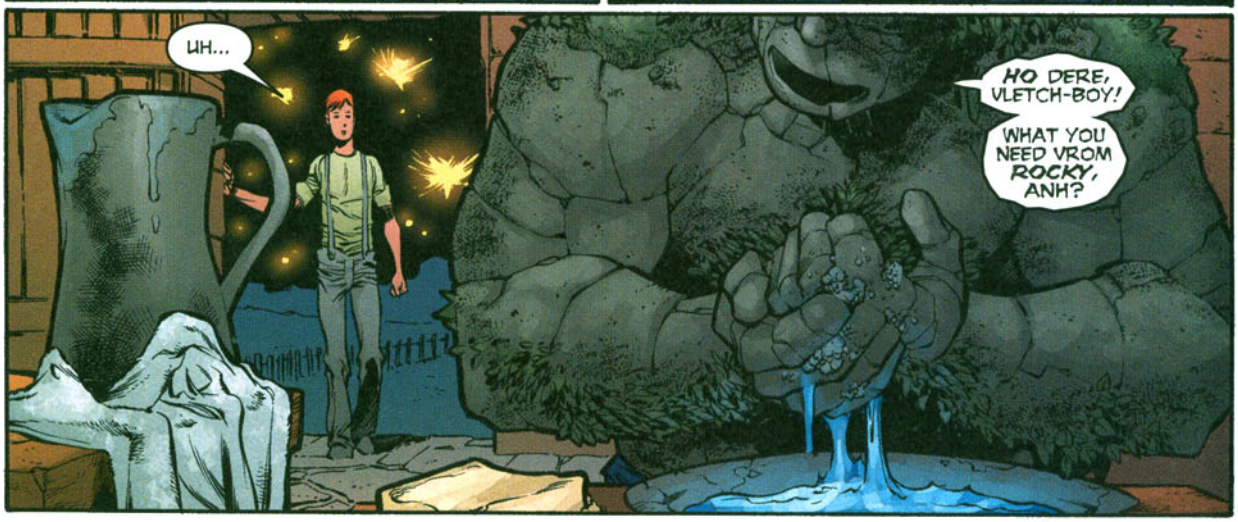

-- BUT IT WON'T CATCH ON HERE. AND NONE O' MINE WILL HAVE ANY TRUCK WITH THAT HIGH-TONE WIZARD FELLA -- OR THAT SLOE-EYED BRAT OF A DAUGHTER --
HEY, WINIFRED ISN'T --


I SAID ENOUGH!
MAN WORKS HARD ALL DAY -- AN' THIS IS WHAT HE GETS AT TABLE?
YOU'RE DONE TALKIN', FLETCHER BOY -- RIGHT NOW!

SULKING, FLETCH?
Y'KNOW, I SAW A PART OF THE SHOW, UP WHEN THEY CRESTED THE HILL. IT WAS SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT.
AND DON'T PAY TOO MUCH MIND TO DAD --
-- THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, THE STATES'LL GET INTO THE WAR EVENTUALLY, JUST WAIT.
WE'LL BE IN IT, YOU'LL SEE.
YOU REALLY THINK SO, MARTY?
WELL, MAYBE NOT YOU.
I'LL BE IN IT, THERE'LL BE TIME FOR THAT. BUT THERE'S NO WAY IT'LL LAST LONG ENOUGH FOR A KID YOUR AGE...
DON'T SIT OUT TOO LATE. MOM'LL WORRY.



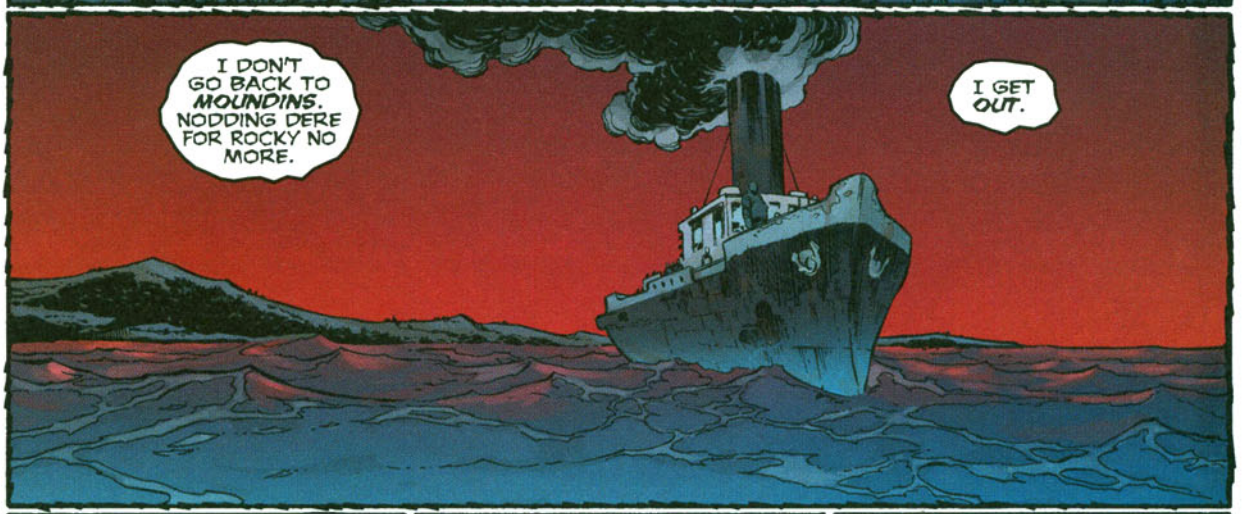
SPRITES...
IF HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS *EVENING RITUALS*...


UH...
HO DERE, VLETCH-BOY!
WHAT YOU NEED VROM *ROCKY*, ANH?

I, AH... IF YOU'RE BUSY, MR. RAKH -- RAKHMATA --
HAH -- MY REAL NAME IS NOT FOR HUMIN T'ROATS. CHUST CALL ME ROCKY.
YOU NEED LIFTING SUMPING HEAVY?
NO, I -- ROCKY, YOU WERE OVER IN EUROPE WHEN THE FIGHTING STARTED. YOU'VE BEEN HERE LESS THAN A YEAR.
WHAT -- WHAT WAS IT LIKE?
DE WAR?
WAS BAD.
TRUSS ME, VER' BAD. DASS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.
BAD.
NO, I --
YOU SAW IT, ROCKY. YOU CAN TELL ME. IS IT LIKE EVERYONE SAYS, OR...?
OGAY, OGAY.
YOU REALLY WAN' TO KNOW, ROCKY TELL YOU.
SIT, SIT.
MY PEOPLES -- DE ROCK-TROLLS -- WE ORIGINALLY VROM INSIDE DE VAALSERBERG MOUNDIN, IN LOT'ARINGIA.
BUT SINZ DE PEACE OF CHARLEMAGNE, WE HAVE MORE AN' MORE TO DO WIT' DE VLESHMEN -- DE HUMINS -- AN' WE LIVE MORE OUDSIDE.
MY VAMILY, WE TRADE WIT' HUMINS, DIG CRYSTALS DE WIZARDS LIKE FOR SPELLS.
WORK IN VIELDS SOME, TOO -- HELP OUT VARMERS.

ROCKY HEAR NEWS. PRINCE IN TYROLIA KILT BY SERBIA. TYROLIA MAD. MUSCOVY MAD. PRUSSIA, BAVARIA, GALLIA MAD.
KINGS AN' SUCH, ALL MAD. MY VRIENDS SAY WAR COMING.
ROCKY NOT WORRIED. TYROLIA, SERBIA, LONG FAR AWAY. WHY WILL TROUBLE COME HERE?
BUT PRUSSIA VRIENDS WIT' TYROLIA. MUSCOVY VRIENDS WIT' SERBIA. GALLIA VRIENDS WIT' MUSCOVY. LOT'ARINGIA VRIENDS WIT' GALLIA.
DEY START PREPARING ARMY -- CALLING SOLCHERS, TAKING WAGGONS, HORSES, ANYT'ING USEFUL.
WHEN ROCKY HEAR THEY TAKING EVEN WIZARDS INTO ARMY, ROCKY KNOWS IS TIME TO GO BACK -- BACK DEEP INTO MOUNDINS.
MY VAMILY SAY IT NEVER COME TO WAR, NOT SO VAR FROM SERBIA. NOT WITH ALBION VRIENDS WITH LOT'ARINGIA TOO, BACK THEM UP IN VIGHT.
NEVER HAPPEN, DEY SAY. NEVER HAPPEN.

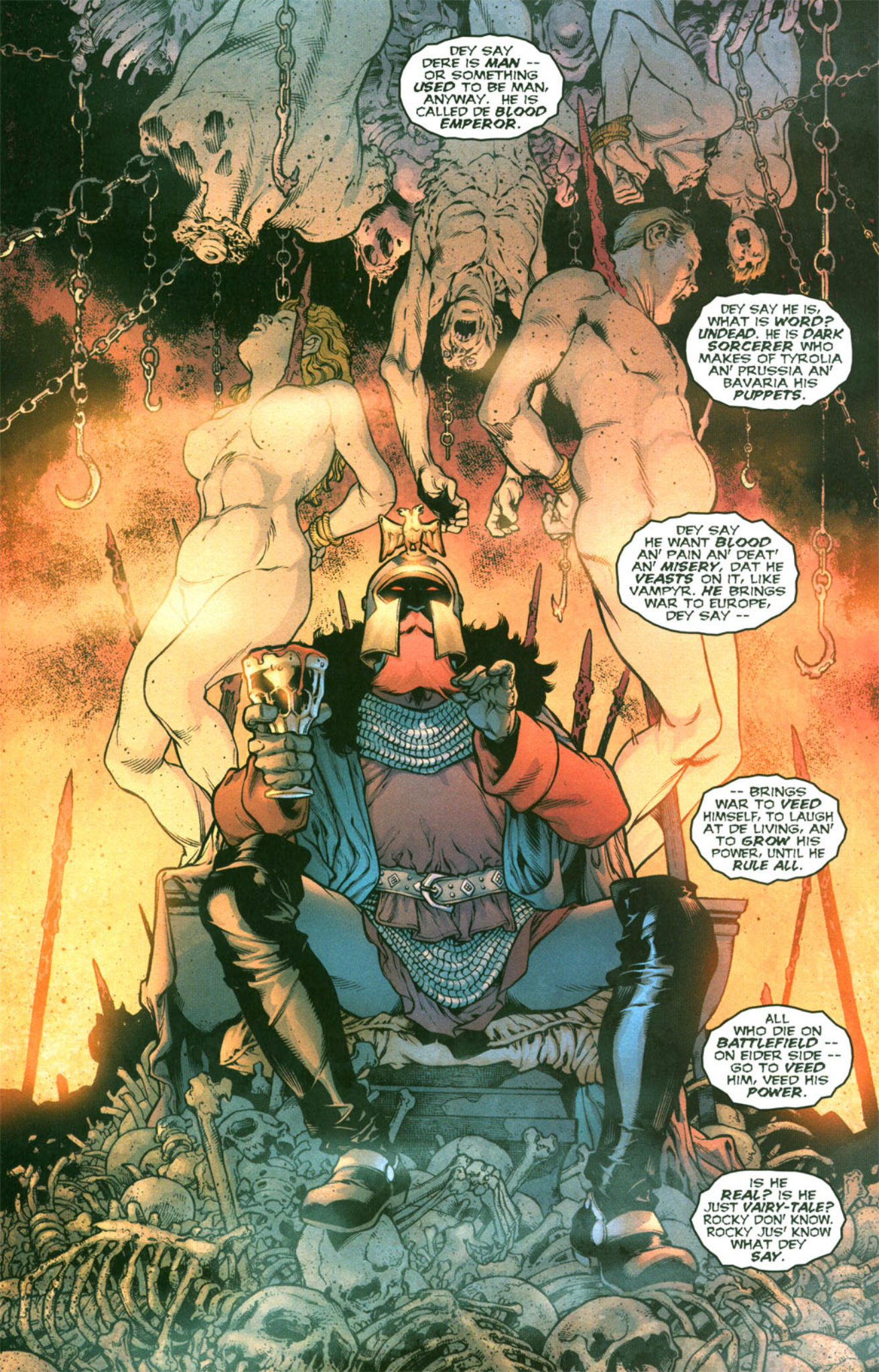
IT HAPPEN.
I AM IN VILLAGE, SELLING CRYSTALS TO WIZARD LEAVING FOR ARMY. PRUSSIA ATTACK LOT'ARINGIA. DEY SAY IN CASE LOT'ARINGIA ATTACK DEM FIRST.
DEY GOING T'ROUGH, ON WAY TO ATTACK GALLIA.
DRAGONVLAME, CANNONS -- DEY ATTACK WIT' ENOUGH TO BREAK STONE WALLS. ENOUGH TO BREAK STONE WALLS BREAKS MY VAMILY, TOO. BREAK DEM DEAD.

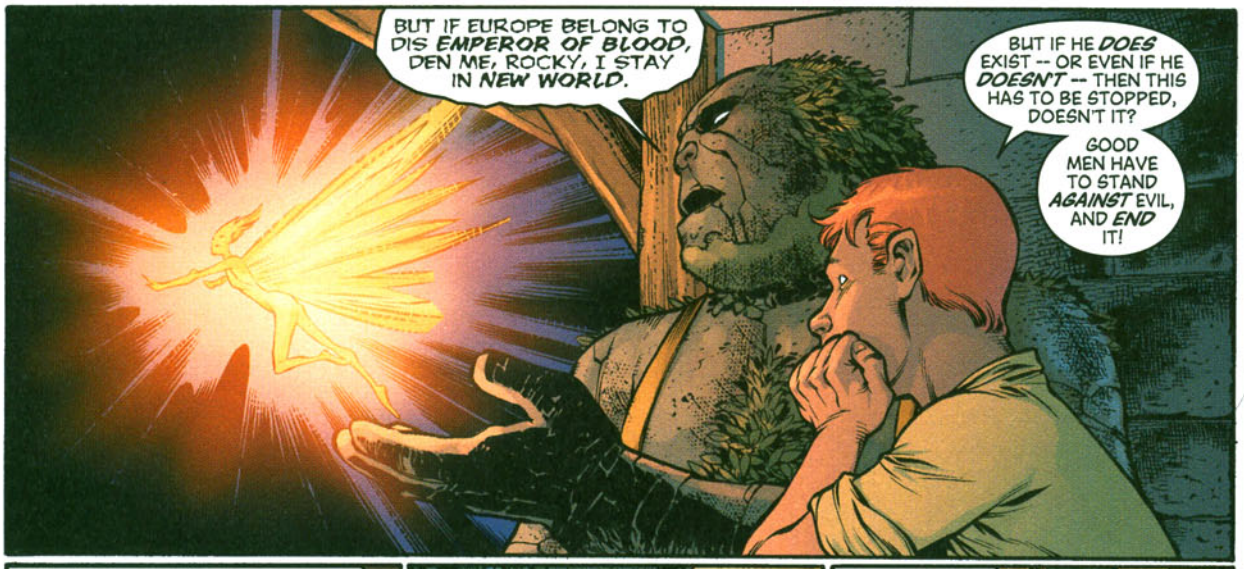

I DON'T GO BACK TO MOUNDINS. NODDING DERE FOR ROCKY NO MORE.
I GET OUT.

I GET OUT, COME TO STATES OF COLUMBIA. WHERE IS NO WAR, AND IF PEOPLE SMART, NEVER WILL BE. I START NEW LIFE.
BUT THE PRUSSIANS -- THEY'RE DOING AWFUL THINGS! I READ ABOUT VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES AND WORSE, LET LOOSE IN GALLIA!
LET DEM.
DEY DO WHAT DEY WANT. ROCKY STAY HERE.

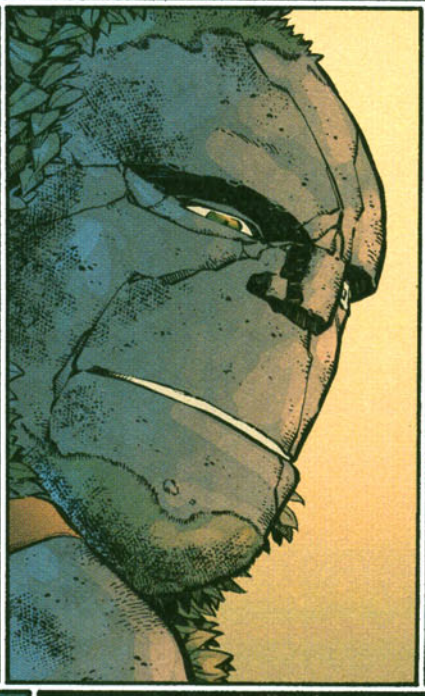
YOU KNOW WHAT ROCKY HEAR IS BEHIND WAR?
NOT CHUST DEAD PRINCE IN TYROLIA -- IF DAT ALL, IT BE OVER BY NOW.

NO, DEY SAY IS SOMET'ING MORE...


DEY SAY DERE IS MAN -- OR SOMETHING USED TO BE MAN, ANYWAY. HE IS CALLED DE BLOOD EMPEROR.
DEY SAY HE IS, WHAT IS WORD? UNDEAD. HE IS DARK SORCERER WHO MAKES OF TYROLIA AN' PRUSSIA AN' BAVARIA HIS PUPPETS.
DEY SAY HE WANT BLOOD AN' PAIN AN' DEAT' AN' MISERY, DAT HE VEASTS ON IT, LIKE VAMPYR. HE BRINGS WAR TO EUROPE, DEY SAY --
-- BRINGS WAR TO VEED HIMSELF, TO LAUGH AT DE LIVING, AN' TO GROW HIS POWER, UNTIL HE RULE ALL.
ALL WHO DIE ON BATTLEFIELD -- ON EIDER SIDE -- GO TO VEED HIM, VEED HIS POWER.
IS HE REAL? IS HE JUST VAIRY-TALE? ROCKY DON' KNOW. ROCKY JUS' KNOW WHAT DEY SAY.

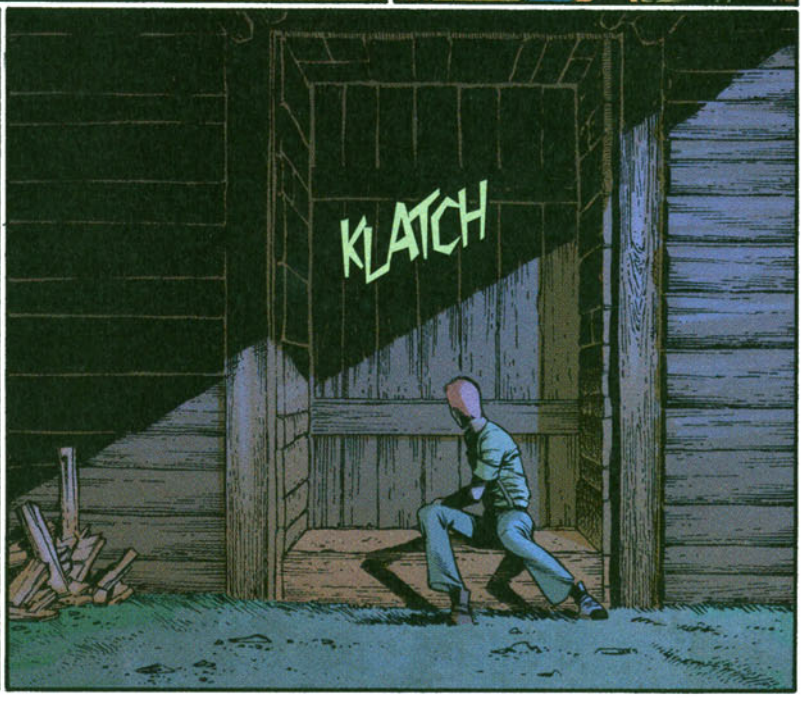

BUT IF EUROPE BELONG TO DIS EMPEROR OF BLOOD, DEN ME, ROCKY, I STAY IN NEW WORLD.
BUT IF HE DOES EXIST -- OR EVEN IF HE DOESN'T -- THEN THIS HAS TO BE STOPPED, DOESN'T IT?
GOOD MEN HAVE TO STAND AGAINST EVIL, AND END IT!

HOW CAN YOU -- HOW CAN YOU JUST LET YOUR FAMILY BE KILLED LIKE THAT, PRACTICALLY IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES, AND IGNORE IT --
-- LET THE BUTCHERS WHO DID IT ROAM FREE?



NO. ROCKY GOT T'INGS TO DO. GOT LONG DAY TOMORROW.
ROCKY GOT TO GO SLEEP, AND SO DOES VLETCH-BOY.
HUH?

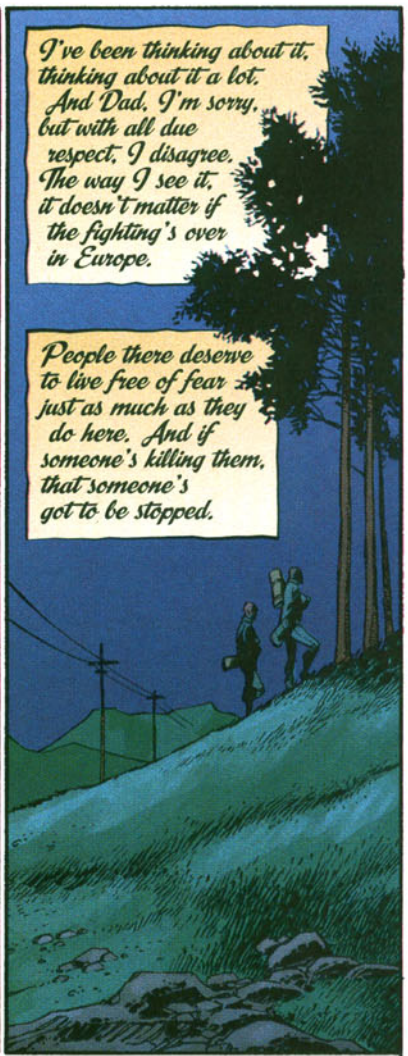
ROCKY, I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO --
-- I WASN'T THINKING --
-- I --


KLATCH

KTAK
TAK

HUH?
FLETCH --?

Dear Mom and Dad.
By the time you read this, I'll be gone. Me and Jonathan Kerry.
DIDN'T THINK YOU'D HAVE IT IN YOU. READY?
LET'S GO.
We're going to join up.


I've been thinking about it, thinking about it a lot. And Dad, I'm sorry, but with all due respect, I disagree. The way I see it, it doesn't matter if the fighting's over in Europe.
People there deserve to live free of fear just as much as they do here. And if someone's killing them, that someone's got to be stopped.

The Overseas Aero Corps will teach me to fly, teach me magic, and I'll be able to go over there --
-- to go and fight for a good cause.

I'll write when I'm settled, and I'll get Jonathan to write his folks, too. In the meantime, don't worry about either of us.
We'll be fine, trust me. And we'll be doing something worth doing.

Your loving son,
Fletcher
THIS IS GREAT, ISN'T IT? THIS IS REALLY GREAT.
WE'RE NOT BOYS ANY MORE. WE'RE MEN NOW. DOING SOMETHING WITH OUR LIVES.
YEAH...
THAT'S THE PART THAT MAKES IT FEEL RIGHT, THAT MADE UP MY MIND. LEARNING TO FLY, THAT'LL BE WONDERFUL, BUT WE'RE NOT DOING THIS FOR THE FUN OF IT.
WE'RE DOING THIS BECAUSE IT NEEDS TO BE DONE. WE'RE GOING TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING -- GOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.
WE'RE GOING TO MATTER.
Next: THE YOUNG MUST TRY THEIR WINGS...

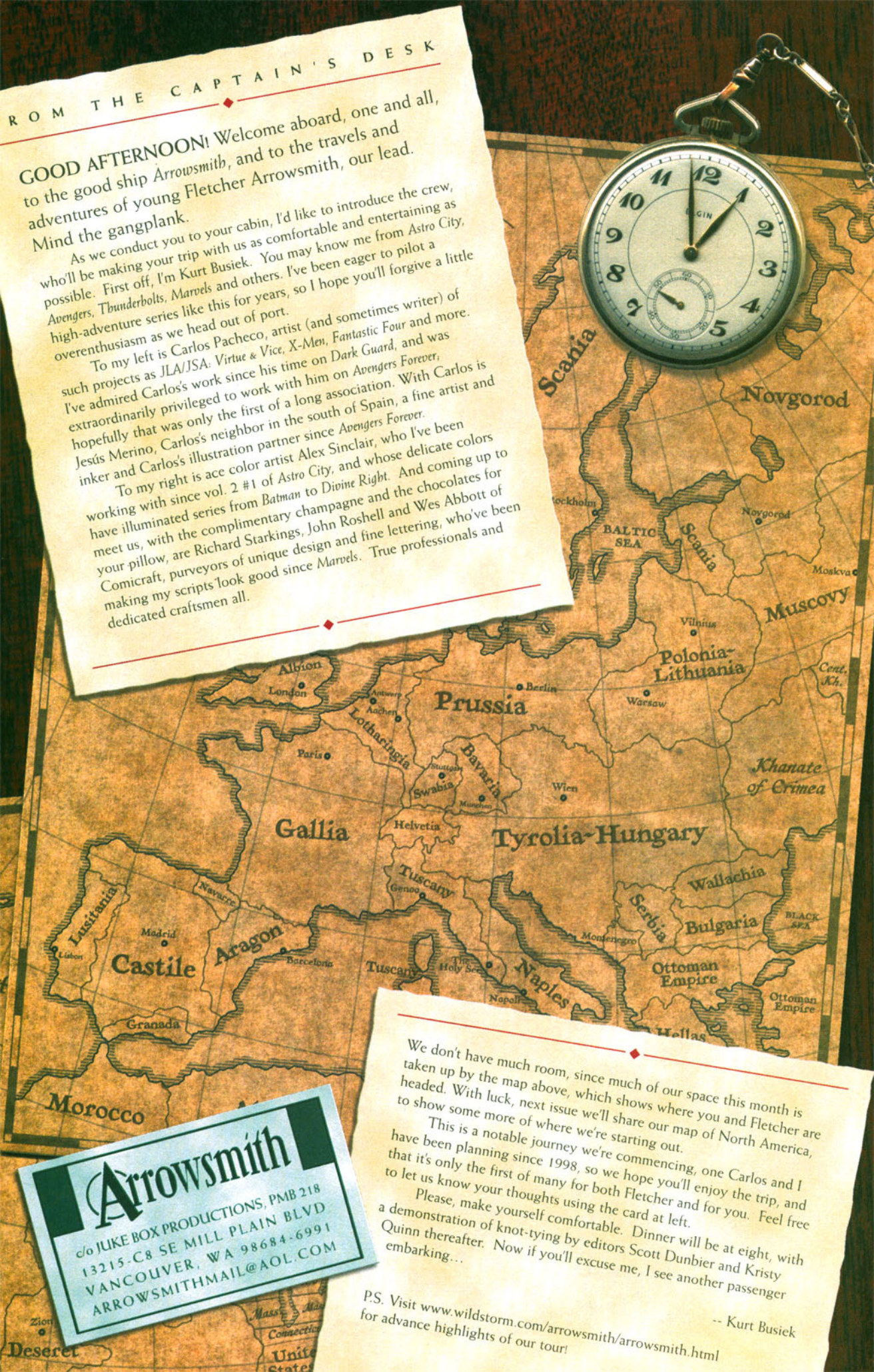
FROM THE CAPTAIN'S DESK

GOOD AFTERNOON! Welcome aboard, one and all, to the good ship *Arrowsmith*, and to the travels and adventures of young Fletcher Arrowsmith, our lead. Mind the gangplank.

As we conduct you to your cabin, I'd like to introduce the crew, who'll be making your trip with us as comfortable and entertaining as possible. First off, I'm Kurt Busiek. You may know me from *Astro City*, *Avengers*, *Thunderbolts*, *Marvels* and others. I've been eager to pilot a high-adventure series like this for years, so I hope you'll forgive a little overenthusiasm as we head out of port.

To my left is Carlos Pacheco, artist (and sometimes writer) of such projects as *JLA/JSA*: *Virtue & Vice*, *X-Men*, *Fantastic Four* and more. I've admired Carlos's work since his time on *Dark Guard*, and was extraordinarily privileged to work with him on *Avengers Forever*, hopefully that was only the first of a long association. With Carlos is Jesús Merino, Carlos's neighbor in the south of Spain, a fine artist and inker and Carlos's illustration partner since *Avengers Forever*.

To my right is ace color artist Alex Sinclair, who I've been working with since vol. 2 #1 of *Astro City*, and whose delicate colors have illuminated series from *Batman* to *Divine Right*. And coming up to meet us, with the complimentary champagne and the chocolates for your pillow, are Richard Starkings, John Roshell and Wes Abbott of Comicraft, purveyors of unique design and fine lettering, who've been making my scripts look good since *Marvels*. True professionals and dedicated craftsmen all.



We don't have much room, since much of our space this month is taken up by the map above, which shows where you and Fletcher are headed. With luck, next issue we'll share our map of North America, to show some more of where we're starting out.

This is a notable journey we're commencing, one Carlos and I have been planning since 1998, so we hope you'll enjoy the trip, and that it's only the first of many for both Fletcher and for you. Feel free to let us know your thoughts using the card at left.

Please, make yourself comfortable. Dinner will be at eight, with a demonstration of knot-tying by editors Scott Dunbier and Kristy Quinn thereafter. Now if you'll excuse me, I see another passenger embarking...

P.S. Visit www.wildstorm.com/arrowsmith/arrowsmith.html for advance highlights of our tour!

-- Kurt Busiek

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BUSIEK & PACHECO

Arrowsmith™

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CONTINUING THE SAGA OF

Arrowsmith

CHAPTER TWO
ON THE SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK

It is 1915, and Europe burns with the fires of war, fires that threaten to spread, and engulf the entire world.

In the United States of Columbia—which is not one of the belligerent nations, not yet—young Fletcher Arrowsmith, the son of a small-town blacksmith, has left his Great Lakes hometown of Herbertsville, Connecticut. He has departed against his father's wishes, to join the Overseas Aero Corps, a squadron of volunteer airmen—organized out of Acadia, one of Columbia's neighbors to the north, with strong ties of blood and history to the besieged nation of Gallia—fighting to save brave Gallia and her allies from the menace of the Central Powers: Prussia, Bavaria, Swabia and the powerful empire of Tyrolia-Hungary.

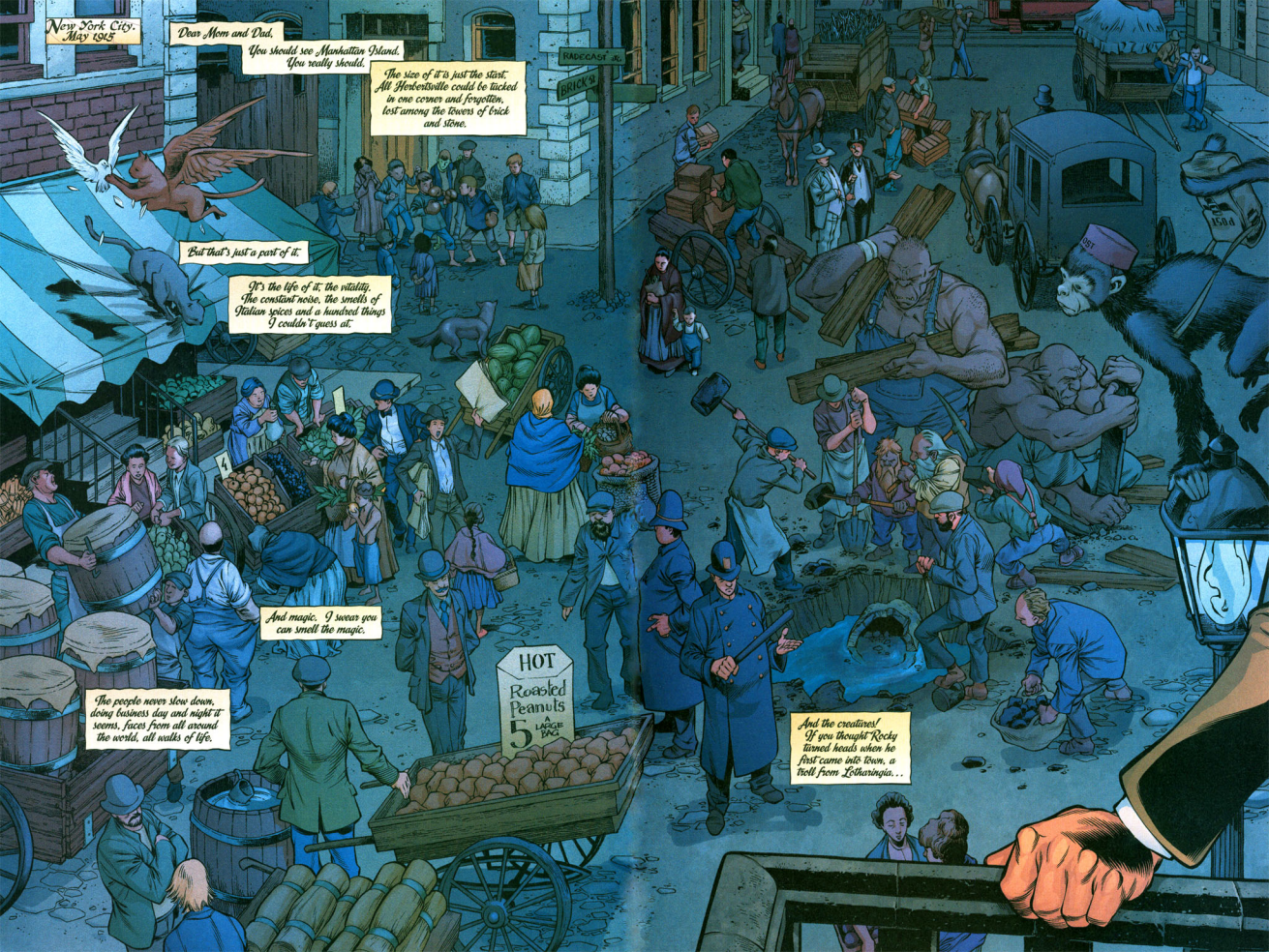
Traveling with his best friend, Jonathan Kerry, Fletcher dreams of being trained in the magic of flight—the spells and sorceries that allow daring young men to soar in the sky like dragons, bringing the fight to the enemy in the war-torn skies over Gallia and Prussian-occupied Lotharingia.

He dreams of doing good. Of fighting for liberty and justice.

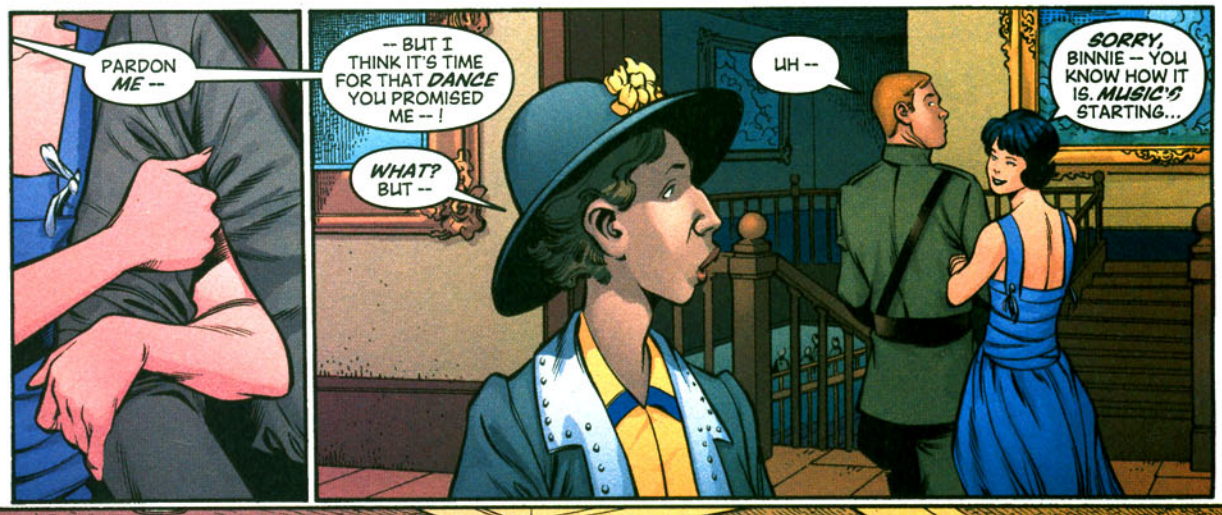
Of making a difference...

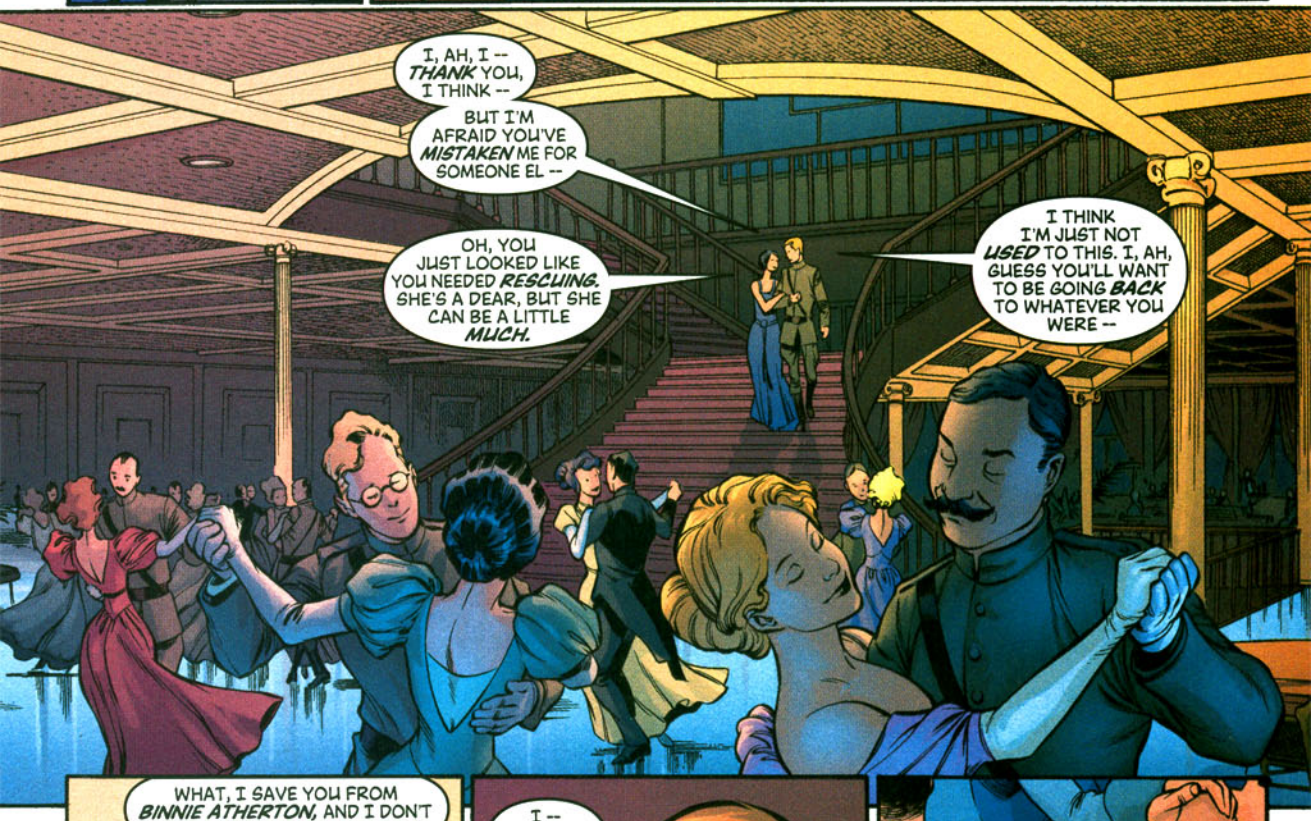
BY KURT BUSIEK & CARLOS PACHECO
JESÚS MERINO, INKER • ALEX SINCLAIR, COLOR ARTIST
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT, LETTERERS
KRISTY QUINN, ASSISTANT EDITOR • SCOTT DUNBIER, EDITOR
LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS, ALTERNITY CONSULTANT
COMICRAFT'S JG ROSHELL, DESIGN & ROD STEEN, CARTOGRAPHER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE ADVENTURER & HERO


New York City. May 1915
Dear Mom and Dad,
You should see Manhattan Island. You really should.
The size of it is just the start. All Herbertsville could be tucked in one corner and forgotten, lost among the towers of brick and stone.
RADECAST JR.
BRICK'S
But that's just a part of it.
It's the life of it, the vitality. The constant noise, the smells of Italian spices and a hundred things I couldn't guess at.
And magic. I swear you can smell the magic.
The people never slow down, doing business day and night it seems, faces from all around the world, all walks of life.
HOT
Roasted Peanuts
5¢ A LARGE BAG
And the creatures! If you thought Rocky turned heads when he first came into town, a troll from Lotharingia...

...why, here no one would even blink...
'S FAULTY WORKM'NSHIP, NN. DUG WRONG...
THE HELL! POOR MATERIALS, IT IS! BACK IN THE AULD COUNTRY, PIPES LIKE THIS'N BE GOOD A THOUSAND YEAR AN' MORE!
BUT A HUMAN KNOWS NAE MORE ABOOT GOOD CLAY THAN A STINKIN' RIVER TROLL KNOWS ABOOT --
NAH, NAH. DWARF WATCH MOUTH, DWARF NOT EAT HIM TEETHS, HM?
AH, AN' LOOK WHO'S TRY'NA TALK NOW, HM? I'LL TELL YOU --
AWFUL, AREN'T THEY? IGNORANT HUNKIES, MY PAPA SAYS, FROM THE FOULEST PARTS OF POLONIA AND HIBERNIA AND WORSE.
HM? I DON'T --
BARELY SMART ENOUGH TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS, MY PAPA SAYS --
-- BUT AT LEAST THEY'RE AS STRONG AS THEY ARE STUPID.
IT'S A CRIME THEY GET TO LIVE ALONGSIDE REAL PEOPLE --
-- BUT SOMEONE'S GOT TO DIG THE SEWERS AND THE TUNNELS, I SUPPOSE, OR AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT PAPA SAYS.
I, AH --
BUT ENOUGH ABOUT THEM. HORRID THINGS.
ISN'T IT LOVELY MRS. RITT THROWS THESE SOIREES FOR THE YOUNG MEN IN UNIFORM --
-- SO THEY CAN MEET REPUTABLE PERSONS THEIR OWN AGE, EVEN FAR FROM HOME?
ER, WELL --
SO A YOUNG MAN COULD TALK TO A GIRL, OR ASK HER TO DANCE, OR --


PARDON ME --
-- BUT I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THAT DANCE YOU PROMISED ME -- !
WHAT? BUT --
UH --
SORRY, BINNIE -- YOU KNOW HOW IT IS. MUSIC'S STARTING...


I, AH, I -- THANK YOU, I THINK --
BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'VE MISTAKEN ME FOR SOMEONE EL --
OH, YOU JUST LOOKED LIKE YOU NEEDED RESCUING. SHE'S A DEAR, BUT SHE CAN BE A LITTLE MUCH.
I THINK I'M JUST NOT USED TO THIS. I, AH, GUESS YOU'LL WANT TO BE GOING BACK TO WHATEVER YOU WERE --

WHAT, I SAVE YOU FROM BINNIE ATHERTON, AND I DON'T EVEN GET A DANCE OUT OF IT?
DO YOU INTEND TO MAKE A LIAR OUT OF ME, SIR?

I -- NO, NO, OF COURSE NOT!
SHALL WE?

DELIGHTED.

I'M GRACE HILLIARD. OF THE MYRTLE BEACH HILLARDS? "HILLIARD PACKAGED SORCERIES?"
FLETCHER ARROWSMITH. I'M FROM --
-- OH, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE HEARD OF IT.
HEY, HEY!

HM? JONATHAN?
NICE WORK, FLETCHER-BOY! WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT YOU HAD IT IN YOU!

FRIEND OF YOURS?
JUST IGNORE HIM, HE'S HOPELESS.
SO ... ARE YOU AND MR. HOPELESS ON LEAVE, THEN? WITH ONE OF THE VOLUNTEER FORCES IN GALLIA?

OH, NO, NO -- NOT YET, ANYWAY. WE'RE JUST CADETS, WE HAVEN'T SHIPPED OUT YET. WE'RE BEING TRAINED AS AIRMEN, OVER IN NEW JERSEY...
AIRMEN?

YOU ... YOU'RE LEARNING TO FLY? THE MAGIC SPELLS AND ALL...
OH, THAT MUST BE SO WONDERFUL, SOARING THROUGH THE SKY LIKE THAT!
IS IT? IS IT SIMPLY THRILLING?

UH, WELL --

-000 000 UFF!
Camp Roland. Essex County, New Jersey
CALL THAT A LANDING, ARROWSMITH?! I'VE SEEN BETTER FORM FROM A SACK OF POTATOES!
OF ALL THE SORRY, FLEA-BITTEN, NO-MAGICAL-TALENT LOSERS I'VE EVER SEEN, ARROWSMITH, YOU MAY JUST TAKE THE CAKE!
WE GO TO THE TROUBLE OF GETTING YOU LAUNCHED, AND THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN MANAGE?
Uh --
HANFORD!
START YOUR INCANTATIONS!
Y-YES, SERGEANT ROYCE!
Oh, JUST THRILLING, ISN'T IT?
SIMPLY THRILLING!

ARROWSMITH!
DID I SAY I WAS FINISHED WITH YOU?
Uh, N-NO, SERGEANT

SEE THIS? PURE ORICHALC. HOLDS THE SPELL THAT TRANSFERS THE POWER OF FLIGHT FROM THE DRAGONET TO YOU.
HARD TO FIND, IMPOSSIBLE TO MINE ...

...WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE IT ON IDIOTS WHO CAN'T USE IT. YOURS ISN'T BROKEN, IT'S CHARGED ...
YOU'VE JUST GOT TO DO LIKE WE TELL YOU. EASY AS PIE.

I, Uh, THOUGHT I WAS DOING --
YOU'RE TRYING TOO HARD, KID. STOP THINKING SO MUCH.
RELAX INTO IT. LET THE SPELL TAKE YOU.

SEE?
Uhp -- !
DON'T THINK ABOUT IT. JUST FEEL IT. FEEL IT, AND --
I, uh --

I --

THAT WAS --
IT'S SO --
-- ULFFF!
WELL, ARROWSMITH. THAT WAS BETTER.
THERE MAY JUST BE HOPE FOR YOU AFTER ALL.
EASED YOUR LANDING SOME TOO, EH?
ALL RIGHT, THEN. WHO THINKS THEY CAN DO BETTER THAN ARROWSMITH? HANFORD, YOU'RE UP. TAGGART -- INCANTATIONS.
HEY, NICE! HOW'D YOU DO IT?
DON'T REALLY KNOW. I WAS TOO SCARED TO THINK STRAIGHT, AND THEN I WAS JUST DOING IT, AND IT WAS WORKING, BUT I GOT NERVOUS, AND --
-- NFF!
HEY, WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, FELLA!
Hmph.
SO WHO THE HELL'S THAT, AND WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?
MITCH TAGGART. HE WAS TOPS IN THE CLASS BEFORE NOW. LOOKS LIKE HE DOESN'T LIKE BEING UPSTAGED...

Dear Marty,
Dad's still not letting you go? Too bad.
They work us pretty hard here. All the spell groups just for flying — I can only wonder what full wizards go through!
AND TO COUNTER TURBULENCE OR STORMS...

Barracks life has its ups and downs...
S-SIR ... I DIDN'T ...
NO EXCUSES, ARROWSMITH! I EXPECT BETTER THAN THIS ... THIS DISGRACEFUL SLOVENLINESS!

...but however tough it may be at times, it's worth anything to learn to fly!
TELL 'EM, CADET.
LEAN INTO IT, JONATHAN.
GET ON TOP OF IT, YOU'LL FEEL IT...

And the guys here are good eggs. Mostly.
HAW!
GUESS I DIDN'T SEE YOU, BROWN-NOSE!
I SWEAR... I'LL...
FLETCH, DON'T! YOU'VE GOT A WEEKEND PASS!
HE KNOWS YOU'LL LOSE IT IF YOU GET IN A FIGHT! JUST LET IT GO, LET IT GO...

But that's just training. There's more to your little brother than that. Why, just last weekend...
LOOK AT THEM, FLETCHER...

STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES

ON SALE EVERY MONTH

"No, I don't order STORMWATCH for the shelf, only for customers who request it in advance."

That's the answer I received recently when I walked into a comic store in Phoenix and asked if they had any copies they'd like me to sign for their customers.

Why he didn't order it? There are just too many books out there--and he doesn't order something if he doesn't read it himself. Had he ever read STORMWATCH? "No."

Smiling, I reached into my backpack and pulled out a few recent issues. The guy behind the counter began to flip through them, moving faster and faster. Finally he looked up and asked, "This is amazing...why haven't I heard about this book?"

I don't know. I don't have a good reason for that. Maybe because it's a Mature Readers title...a lot of people don't know what that label means, or they think "Porn!" Maybe because it's my first comics work...I'm not famous, I don't have a built-in fanbase of 50,000 readers. It's surely not because the book isn't well reviewed...we get glowing reviews at all the comics sites. It's definitely not because the art isn't fantastic...amazing new artist C.P. Smith is bringing the heat and we've got multiple-award-winning Jeromy Cox for a colorist. And get ready for the covers on this book to start popping off the shelves--starting with issue #15, our new cover artist is the legendary Michael Golden.

So if YOUR Local Comic Store owner hasn't read STORMWATCH or isn't ordering it for the shelves, maybe you need to have a short conversation with him. After all, it's fun to be part of a small group of people who enjoy a book...but it's a whole lot more satisfying to be the person who helps other readers find it.

And hey, the more people who buy it, the longer the book will be around for you to enjoy it.

thanks,
Micah

WILDSTORM

21 Down #12

Extinction Event #2

Gen13 #12

Gen13: September Song TPB

Planetary #16

Robotech: Love and War #3

Sleeper #8

Stormwatch: Team Achilles #14

The Authority #0

The Authority #4

Thundercats: Dogs Of War #3

Wildcats Version 3.0: Brand Building TPB

Wildcats Version 3.0 #13

CLIFFHANGER

Arrowsmith #2

Tokyo Storm Warning #3

The Possessed #2

Epicurus: The Sage TPB

The Maxx Book One TPB

AMERICA'S BEST COMICS

Smax #1

Terra Obscura #3

HOMAGE

Astro City #4

Red #2

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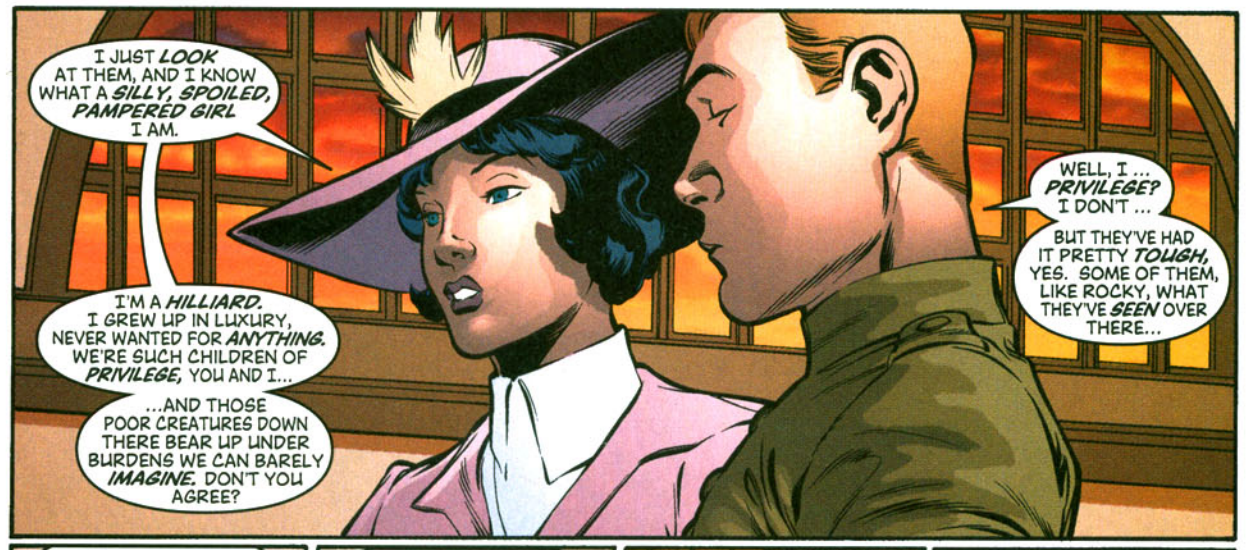
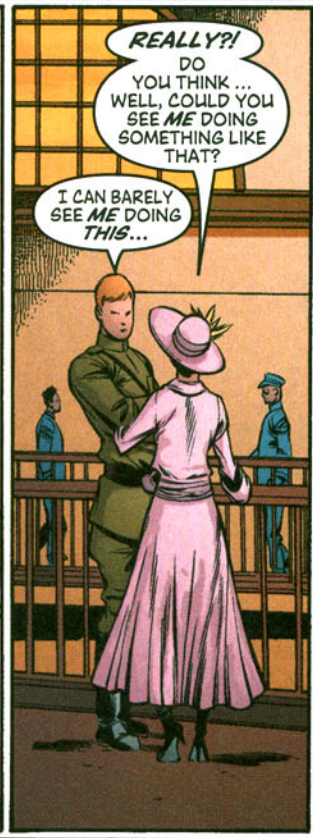
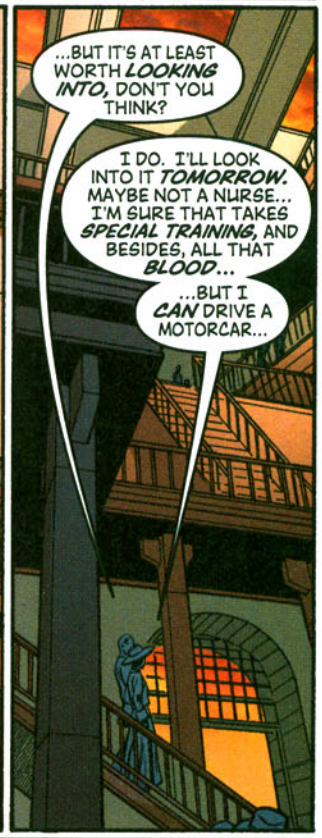
... JUST LOOK AT THEM ALL.
Ellis Island. Upper New York Bay.
NEXT!
NAME?
JHI'SANDIA, SOR...
WRITE DOWN "JOHNSON," TEBBITS.
YESSIR.
NEXT!
ALL THESE MEN... AND BEINGS... THE HARDSHIP THEY MUST HAVE ENDURED, TO WALK AWAY FROM THEIR LIVES...
...LEAVING HOMES, MAYBE EVEN FAMILIES, TO START OVER HERE IN A NEW COUNTRY. IT'S BREATHTAKING... STIRRING. ISN'T IT?
I GUESS I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
THERE ARE A FEW IMMIGRANTS BACK HOME ... ONE ROCK-TROLL WHO'S A GREAT GUY, YOU'D LIKE HIM ... BUT NOTHING LIKE THIS.


I JUST LOOK AT THEM, AND I KNOW WHAT A SILLY, SPOILED, PAMPERED GIRL I AM.
I'M A HILLIARD. I GREW UP IN LUXURY, NEVER WANTED FOR ANYTHING. WE'RE SUCH CHILDREN OF PRIVILEGE, YOU AND I...
...AND THOSE POOR CREATURES DOWN THERE BEAR UP UNDER BURDENS WE CAN BARELY IMAGINE. DON'T YOU AGREE?
WELL, I ... PRIVILEGE? I DON'T ...
BUT THEY'VE HAD IT PRETTY TOUGH, YES. SOME OF THEM, LIKE ROCKY, WHAT THEY'VE SEEN OVER THERE...

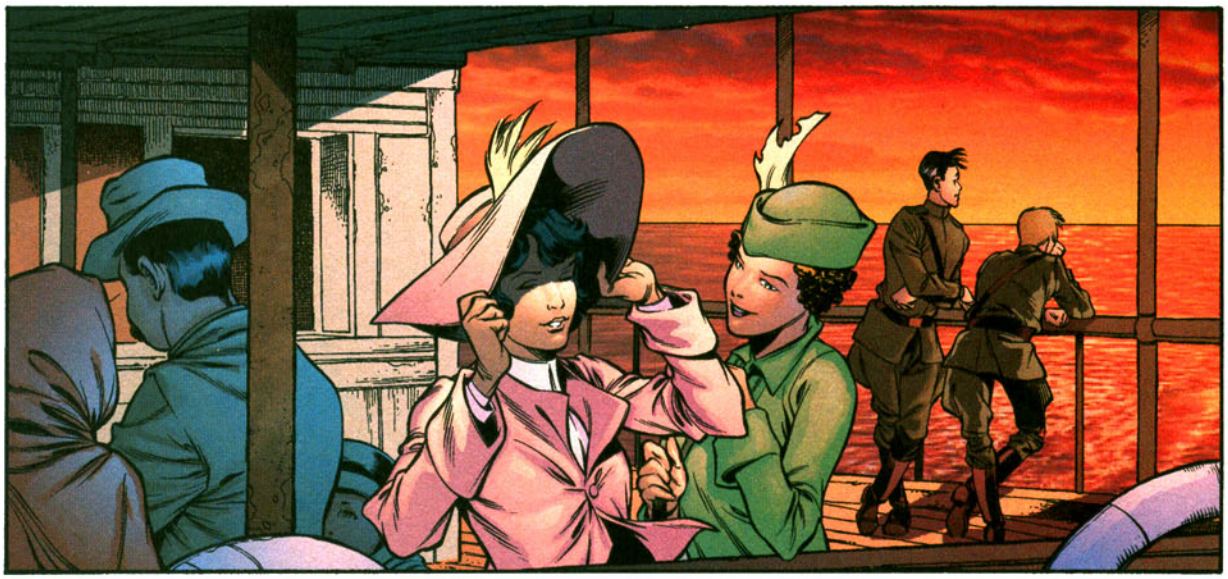
IT'S HUMBLING. I FEEL USELESS, LIKE NOTHING I DO MATTERS.
I'VE BEEN PART OF CLOTHING DRIVES, FOOD DRIVES, BUT IT FEELS LIKE SO LITTLE. I CAN'T VOLUNTEER AS A SOLDIER, HELP END THE WAR...
...BUT SURELY I CAN DO MORE.

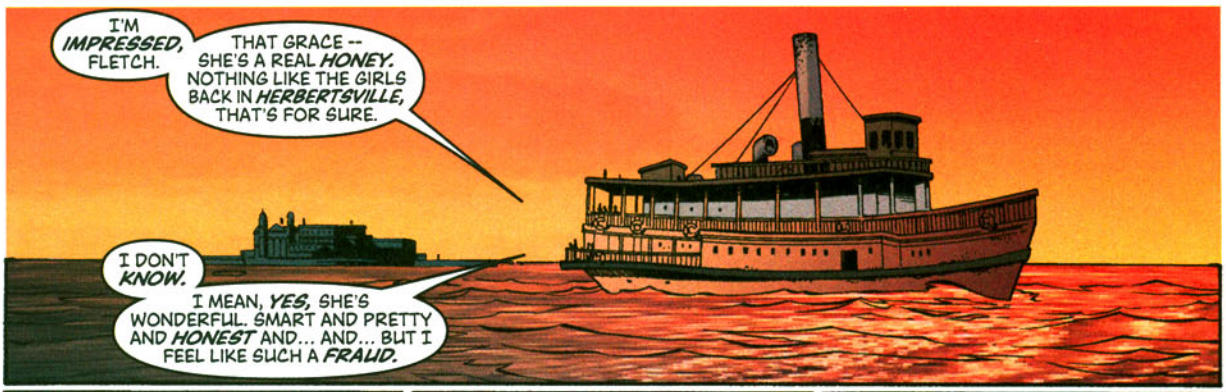
I'M SURE WHAT YOU'RE DOING HELPS.
BUT I READ SOMEWHERE, ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN VOLUNTEERING AS NURSES, OR AS AMBULANCE DRIVERS...


REALLY?! DO YOU THINK ... WELL, COULD YOU SEE ME DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I CAN BARELY SEE ME DOING THIS...


...BUT IT'S AT LEAST WORTH LOOKING INTO, DON'T YOU THINK?
I DO. I'LL LOOK INTO IT TOMORROW. MAYBE NOT A NURSE... I'M SURE THAT TAKES SPECIAL TRAINING, AND BESIDES, ALL THAT BLOOD...
...BUT I CAN DRIVE A MOTORCAR...

FLETCH! GRACE! CONSTANCE AND I WERE WONDERING WHERE YOU'D GOT TO!
YOU SHOULD HAVE COME OVER TO THE STATUE WITH US. THE VIEW FROM THE CROWN--!
UNNERVING WHEN SHE SHIFTS POSITION, THOUGH...

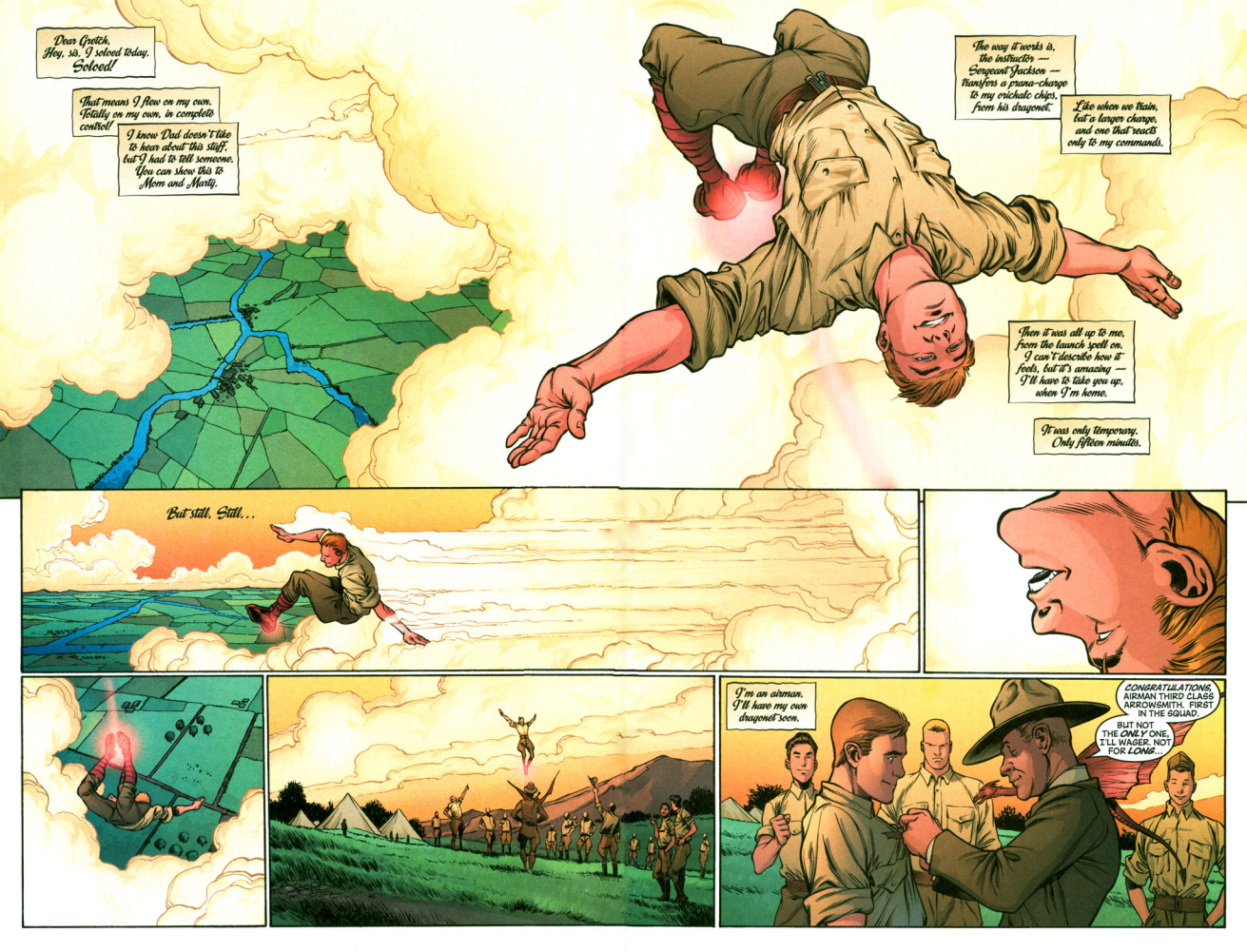



I'M IMPRESSED, FLETCH.
THAT GRACE -- SHE'S A REAL HONEY. NOTHING LIKE THE GIRLS BACK IN HERBERTSVILLE, THAT'S FOR SURE.
I DON'T KNOW.
I MEAN, YES, SHE'S WONDERFUL. SMART AND PRETTY AND HONEST AND... AND... BUT I FEEL LIKE SUCH A FRAUD.

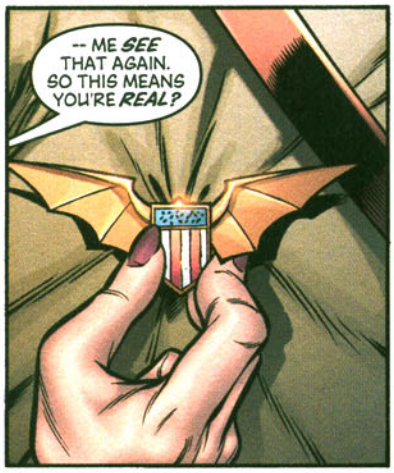
SHE'S A MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER -- THE UPPER OF THE UPPER CRUST -- AND I'VE GOT CHARCOAL UNDER MY FINGERNAILS.
SHE THINKS I'M AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN...
WELL, AREN'T YOU?
OR AT LEAST, AREN'T YOU ABOUT TO BE ONE?

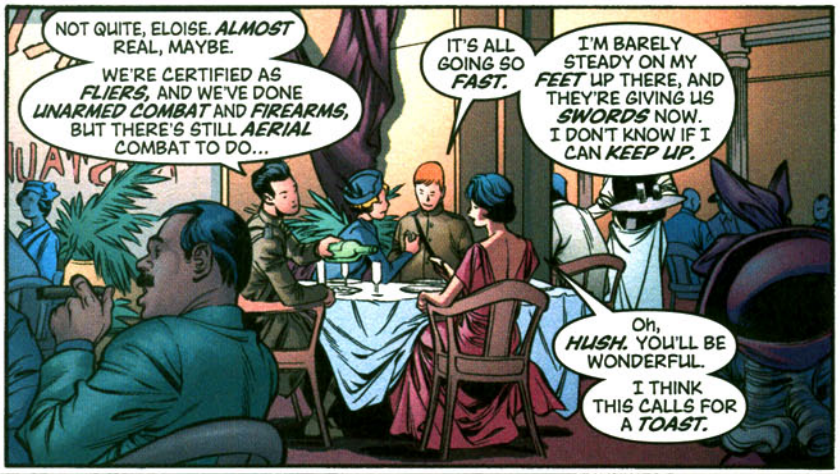
MAYBE. BUT IT FEELS FAKE, LIKE I'M JUST PRETENDING. THE OTHERS, THEY SEEM LIKE THE REAL THING, MOSTLY...
...BUT I'M JUST TRYING TO REMEMBER NOT TO SAY "GEE" AND "OH BOY" ALL THE TIME, EXPOSING MYSELF AS A SMALL-TOWN HICK.
AND WHO SAYS IT'S NOT THE SAME FOR EVERYONE ELSE, HM?
HUH?

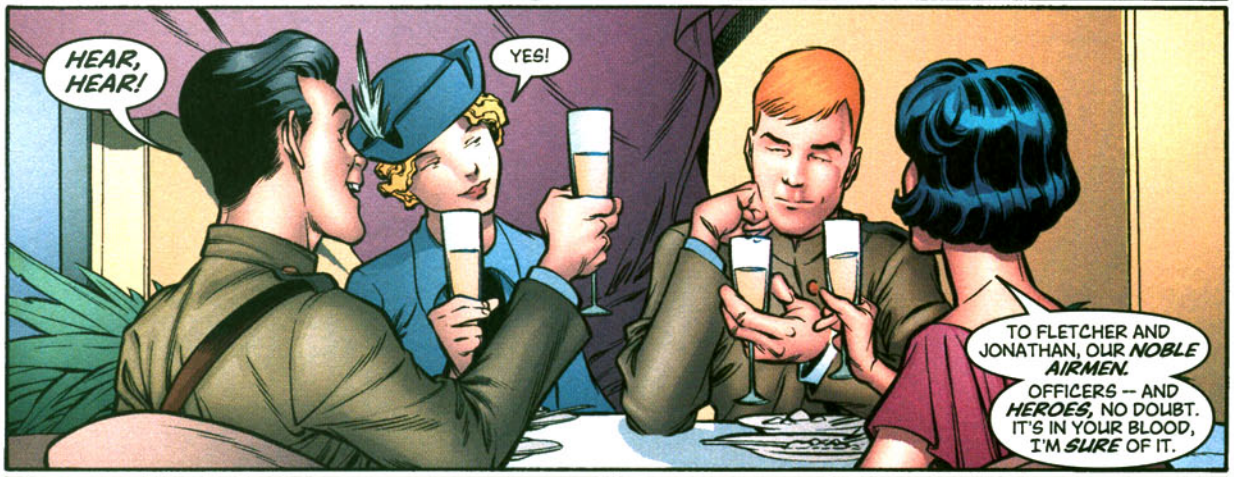
YOU WORRY TOO MUCH, FLETCHER BOY. HASN'T IT EVER OCCURRED TO YOU THAT EVERYONE PRETENDS? THAT'S HOW THEY LEARN TO BE SOMETHING NEW.
NOW C'MON -- PRETEND TO BE CHARMING AND WITTY, AND LET'S GET BACK TO THE GIRLS...


Dear Gretch, Hey, so, I soloed today. Soloed!
That means I flew on my own. Totally on my own, in complete conflict!
I know Dad doesn't like to hear about this stuff, but I had to tell someone. You can show this to Mom and Marty.
The way it works is, the instructor — Sergeant Jackson — transfers a prana-charge to my orichalc chips, from his dragonet.
Like when we train, but a larger charge, and one that reacts only to my commands.
Then it was all up to me, from the launch spell on. I can't describe how it feels, but it's amazing — I'll have to take you up, when I'm home.
It was only temporary. Only fifteen minutes.
But still. Still...
I'm an airman. I'll have my own dragonet soon.
CONGRATULATIONS, AIRMAN THIRD CLASS ARROWSMITH. FIRST IN THE SQUAD.
BUT NOT THE ONLY ONE. I'LL WAGER, NOT FOR LONG.

MERLIN
RESTAURANT


-- ME SEE THAT AGAIN. SO THIS MEANS YOU'RE REAL?


NOT QUITE, ELOISE. ALMOST REAL, MAYBE.
WE'RE CERTIFIED AS FLIERS, AND WE'VE DONE UNARMED COMBAT AND FIREARMS, BUT THERE'S STILL AERIAL COMBAT TO DO...
IT'S ALL GOING SO FAST.
I'M BARELY STEADY ON MY FEET UP THERE, AND THEY'RE GIVING US SWORDS NOW. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN KEEP UP.
Oh, HUSH. YOU'LL BE WONDERFUL.
I THINK THIS CALLS FOR A TOAST.


HEAR, HEAR!
YES!
TO FLETCHER AND JONATHAN, OUR NOBLE AIRMEN.
OFFICERS -- AND HEROES, NO DOUBT. IT'S IN YOUR BLOOD, I'M SURE OF IT.

WHY, I KNEW FROM THE MOMENT I LAID EYES ON THIS YOUNG LAD THAT HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY -- EH?
-- THINK YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THAT CHEAP UNIFORM, EH?

-- ONLY ASKED THE LADY TO DANCE, MISTER! IF SHE WASN'T INTERESTED, ALL SHE HAD TO DO WAS SAY SO!
Oh, I SAW YOU, ALL SWAGGERING, THINKING YOU'RE COCK-OF-THE-WALK!
AS IF YOU WERE A REAL SOLDIER!
WHAT?!

I'M AN AIRMAN IN THE OVERSEAS AERO CORPS! I'LL BE FIGHTING THE PRUSSIANS IN GALLIA WHILE YOU'RE --
WHILE I'M WHAT, PLAY-SOLDIER? NOT FIGHTING EUROPE'S WARS FOR HER? I WAS A ROC-RIDER IN THE FLORIDIAN WAR --
-- AND I WENT TO SERVE MY COUNTRY, NOT JUST FOR A LARK!
NOT SO I COULD WEAR A FANCY UNIFORM AND PICK UP GALLIC TARTS, LIKE YOU IN THE --

MITCH MIGHT ACTUALLY BE IN TROUBLE, FLETCHER. THAT GUY'S GOT A COUPLE OF BUDDIES, SEE? THEY'RE CIRCLING AROUND --
-- EASING UP BEHIND MITCH...
JON, SIT DOWN --!
I AGREE. THAT LOUT WAS MOVING IN ON ANOTHER FELLOW'S GIRL, FLETCHER...
Oh, I DON'T CARE TWO CENTS ABOUT MITCH, GRACE. HE'S BEEN ASKING FOR TROUBLE FOR WEEKS, AND I'D BE HAPPY TO SEE HIM GET IT.
BUT THAT SNOOTY LOUDMOUTH -- HE'S RUNNING DOWN THE O.A.C.
C'MON, JONATHAN.

YOU WANNA TRY SAYING THAT AGAIN, FRIEND?!
I'LL SAY WHATEVER I FEEL LIKE SAYING, YOU --
OKAY, THEY SEE US. THEY'RE NERVOUS, NOT SO SURE ANY MORE.
BUT, FLETCH, LET'S JUST COOL THINGS OFF, OKAY? NO NEED TO ...

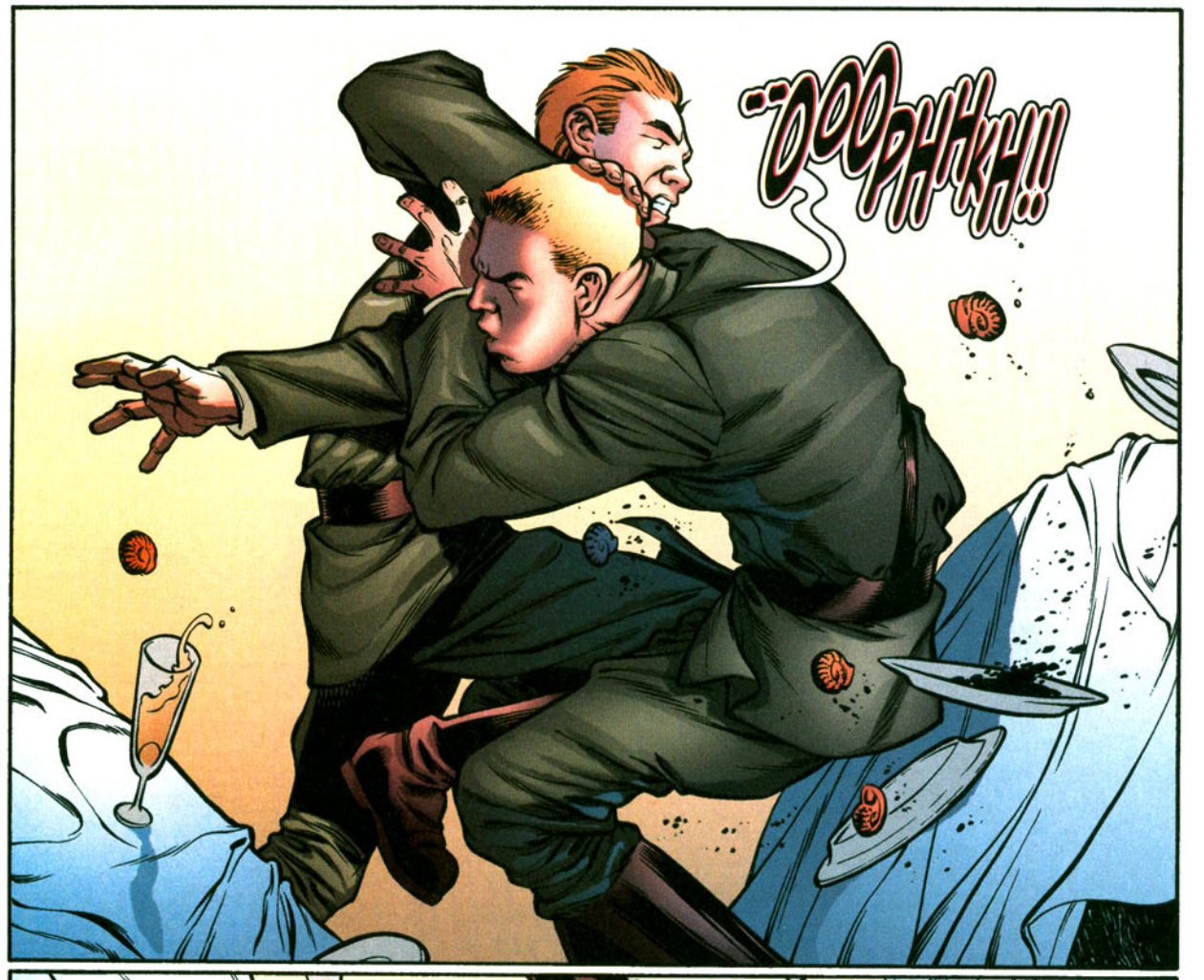
THERE A PROBLEM HERE?
NOTHING I NEED YOUR HELP WITH, ARROWSMITH.
MR. FLORIDA WAR HERO HERE WAS JUST LEAVING. WEREN'T YOU?
HEY!

MARION, JACK, HOWARD... WE'RE GOING!
I'LL OVERLOOK YOUR BOORISHNESS THIS TIME, PLAY-SOLDIER -- BUT IF YOUR FRIENDS WEREN'T HERE --
HAH!
THREE OF THEM, MITCH. LOOKED LIKE YOU COULD USE A HAND.

YEAH? WELL, IF I EVER NEED ANY HELP, ARROWSMITH, I'LL GET IT FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING --
-- NOT A USELESS LITTLE SUCK-UP LIKE YOU!
MIGHT WANT TO WATCH THAT, MITCH. NO SERGEANTS AROUND TO HAND OUT DEMERITS. YOU MIGHT HAVE TO BACK UP THAT MOUTH OF YOURS.

FLETCHER! FLETCHER, JUST FORGET ABOUT IT! I CAME HERE TO HAVE A NICE EVENING OUT, NOT WATCH A BRAWL.
OUR DINNERS ARE HERE. LET'S GO.
WELL --

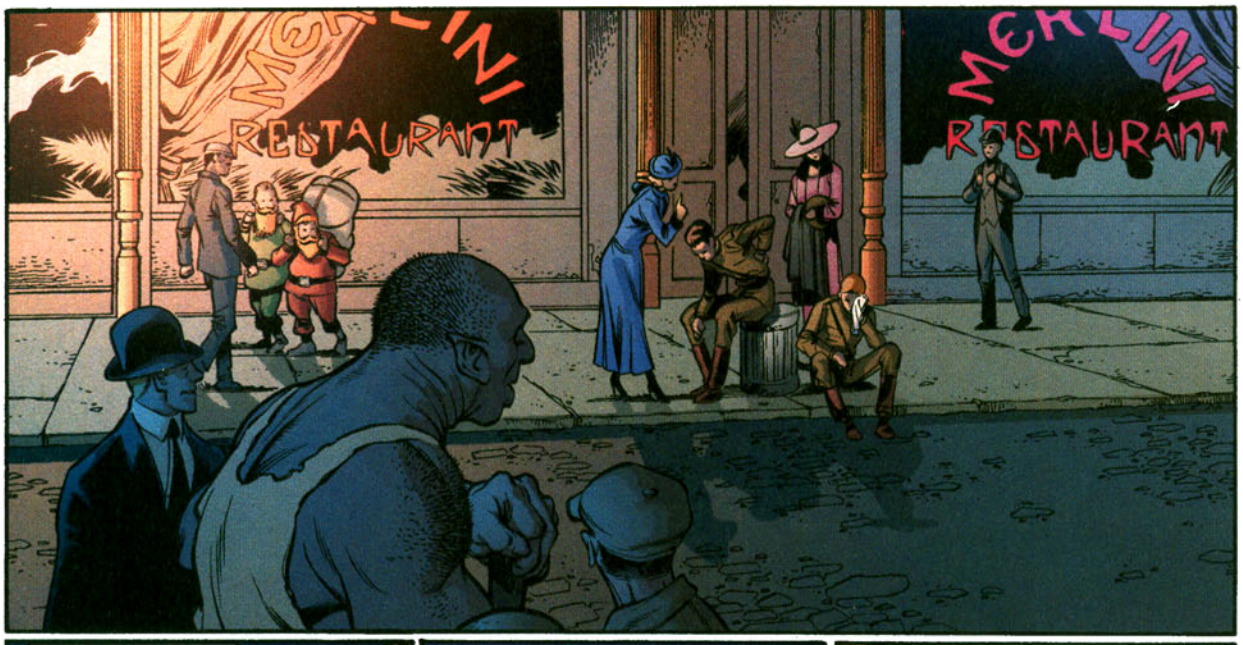
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH YOU, ARROWSMITH. I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN WE GET TO GALLIA AND THE PRUSSIANS COME OUT OF THE CLOUDS?
WON'T BE ANY WOMEN'S SKIRTS THERE TO HIDE BEHIND...
WHAT? WHY, YOU--


--OOOPHHKH!!

-- IT UP TO HERE WITH YOU, TAGGART --
-- BROWN-NOSING LITTLE --
-- MUSCLE-BRAINED --
-- FRY YOUR --

OH. Oh! OH!
UH-OH...

ALL RIGHT, LADS! NO NEED TO BE GENTLE...!


MERLIN
RESTAURANT
MERLIN
RESTAURANT

-- COMMON RUFFIAN, NOT A MAN OF BREEDING AND --
Oh, CUT IT OUT ALREADY.

WHAT?
I'M NOT A GENTLEMAN, ALL RIGHT? MY FATHER'S A BLACKSMITH!
I DON'T HAVE NOBILITY IN MY BLOOD OR BREEDING OR UPBRINGING OR -- OR -- -- OR WHATEVER THE HELL!

I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO! I'D DO IT AGAIN! IF THAT DOESN'T MEASURE UP TO WHATEVER YOU WANT, WHATEVER YOU THOUGHT I WAS --
-- WELL THAT'S JUST TOO BAD!

Uh, LOOK, LADIES, IT'S BEEN A GREAT EVENING ...
... BUT WELL, YOU'RE JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM YOUR HOTEL, AND ...
... I'D BETTER ...
WELL!

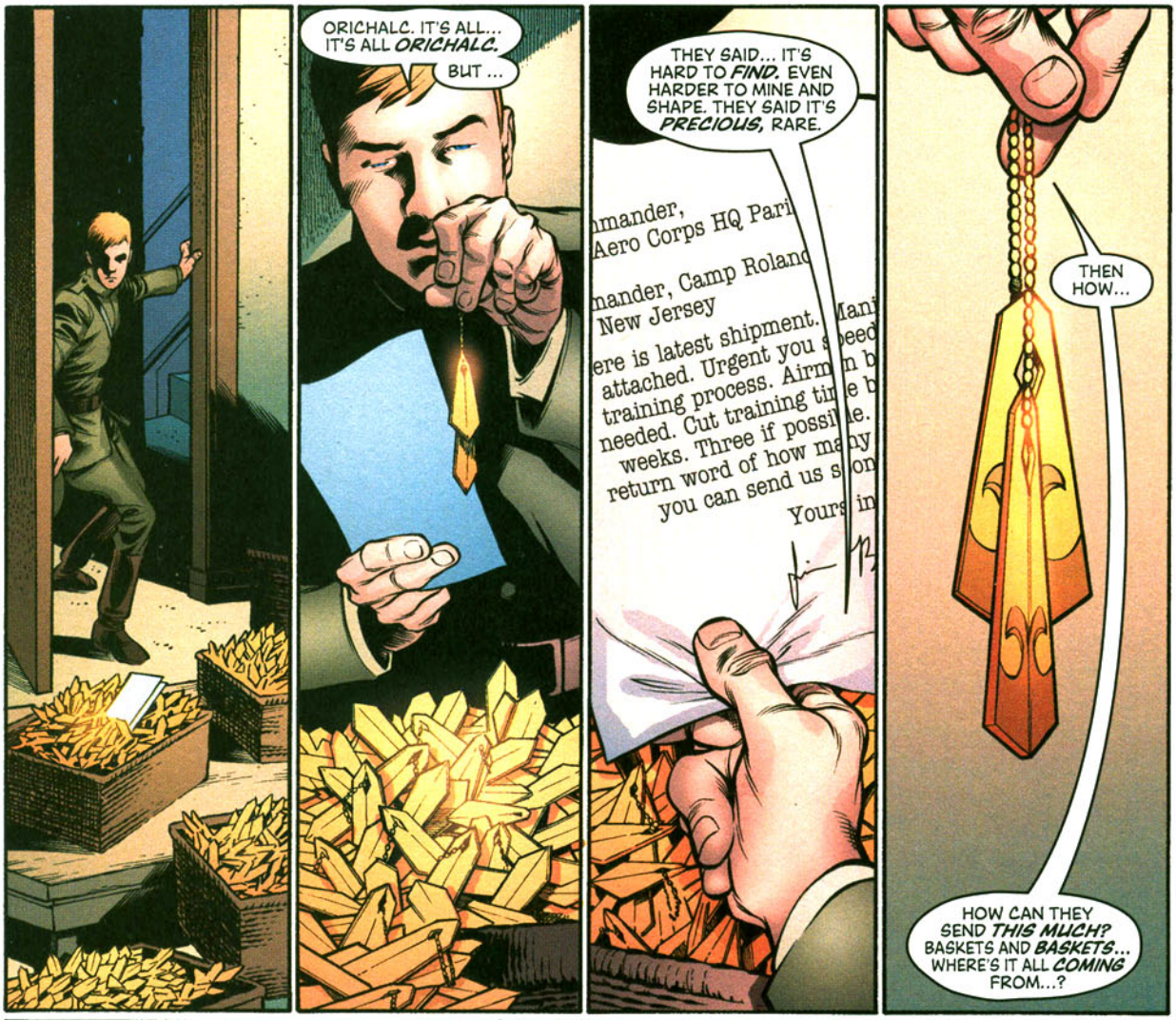
SMOOTH, FLETCHER BOY. REAL SMOOTH. THAT'S MY CAP, BY THE WAY.
I KNOW, IT'S TOO SMALL. I JUST...
OKAY, OKAY, I'M THREE KINDS OF IDIOT. SEVEN KINDS.
DO WE GO BACK, OR...?
WE'RE OFFICERS AND GENTLEMEN, RIGHT? LET'S DO WHAT GENTLEMEN DO, WHEN THEY'VE MADE FOOLS OF THEMSELVES...

I TOL' YOU WE SHOULDA SKIPPED... THA' LAST PLACE... ALMOS' MISSED LAS' FERRY...
ALMOS' ...
SHYEAH, YEAH ... AN' WHO DRAG' ME INTA THREE PLACES BEF'R THAT ONE, UNH?
Y'THINK ... THINK THIS'LL WORK ...?

YEAH, YEAH! WE GO IN MAIN ENTRANCE, WE GET CAUGHT F'R BEING PAST CURFEW, BUT THIS WAY...
SHH! SHHH!
KLATA KLANGG
SOME ... SOME NIGHT, HUH? YOU ...
...YOU SURE LOST YOUR GIRL, Huh?

LOST YOURS TOO ... LOOK OF IT. BUT QU-QUIET. SOMEONE'LL HEAR YOU...
NAH... WE GET BACK TO BUNKS... NOBODY BE... WISER...
OKAY, OKAY... JUST BE... HM?

YOU... GO ON AHEAD, OKAY? I'LL BE ... UP IN A MINUTE...


ORICHALC. IT'S ALL... IT'S ALL ORICHALC.
BUT ...
THEY SAID... IT'S HARD TO FIND. EVEN HARDER TO MINE AND SHAPE. THEY SAID IT'S PRECIOUS, RARE.
THEN HOW...
HOW CAN THEY SEND THIS MUCH? BASKETS AND BASKETS... WHERE'S IT ALL COMING FROM...?

NEXT: KISS ME QUICK, I'M OFF TO FIGHT THE HUN...

FROM THE CAPTAIN'S DESK

Ladies and gentlemen, for your reference —

If you're keeping track of young Fletcher's travels, please note that Herbertsville is on the Great Lakes, a bit to the west of the Pennsylvania border. And New York City, for those few unfamiliar with it, is south of coastal Connecticut, off the west end of that long island jutting out into the Atlantic.

The rest of the continent, alas, must remain to be explored later, as we set sail for Europe and the war in our next installment.

In the meantime, please feel encouraged to grace us with your thoughts, at either of the addresses provided. And have an invigorating day.

— Kurt Busiek

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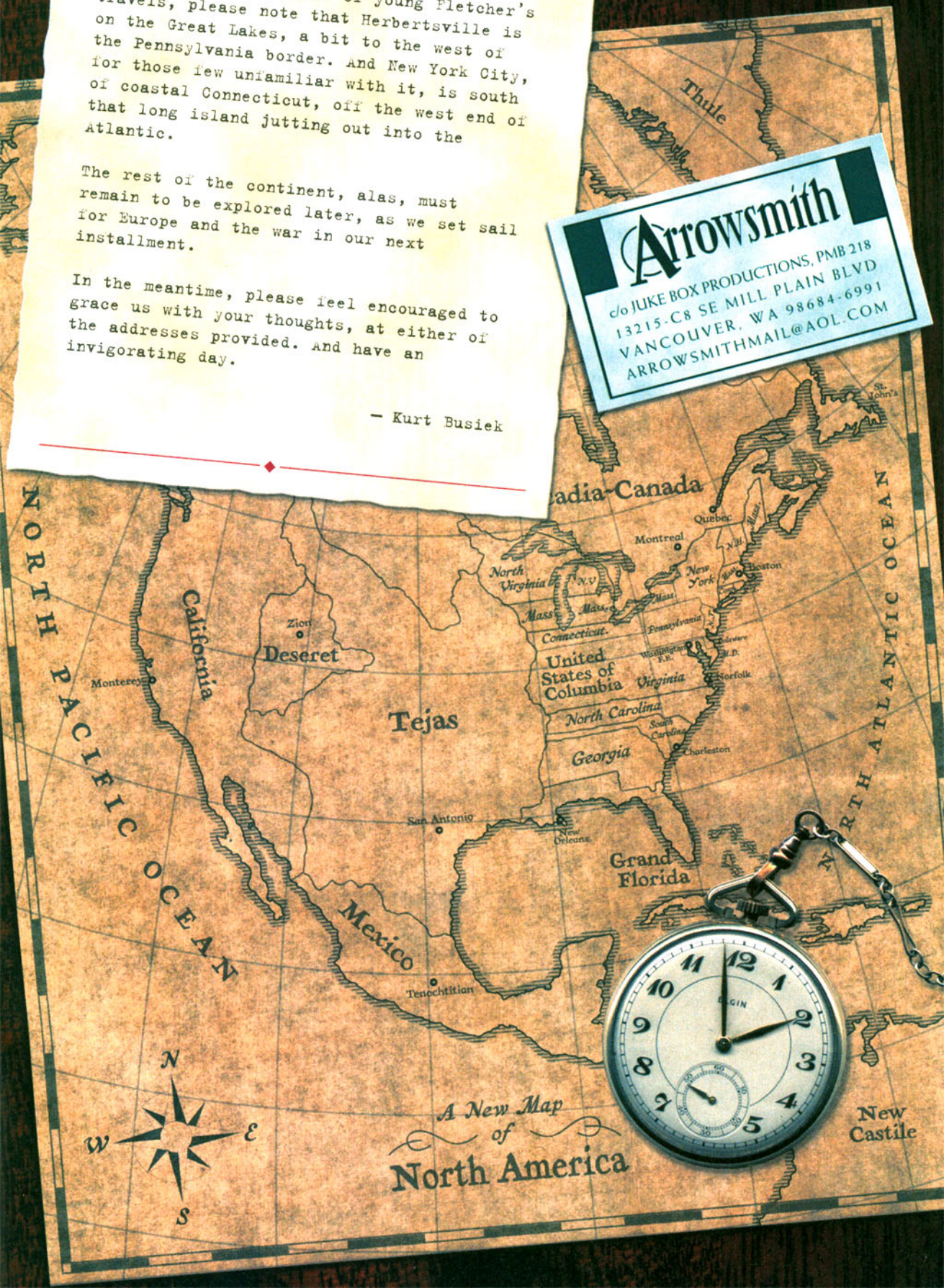

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• CHAPTER THREE •

DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS

The Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Tyrolia-Hungary was assassinated by Serbian nationalists in June 1914, triggering a war that has leapt from nation to nation, leaving Europe in flames. Some say dark sorcery is behind it, some merely the folly of men.

In the still-neutral United States of Columbia, young Fletcher Arrowsmith and his friend Jonathan Kerry have joined the Overseas Aero Corps, a volunteer organization training airmen—wizards who specialize in the spells they need to fly unaided and wage a new war, a war in the air. Swiftly trained at Camp Roland in New Jersey, Fletcher and Jonathan have completed their training. They have also made an enemy—the belligerent Mitchell Taggart, who has reacted badly to Fletcher outperforming him in flight drills.

In addition, Fletcher has met a young woman—Grace Hilliard, daughter of an industrial-magic magnate, who dreams of doing her part for the war effort. But during their last evening together, a fight broke out, and Fletcher and Jonathan did their part to uphold the honor of the O.A.S. Grace took exception to the fracas...

...and they parted on less-than-amicable terms...

BY KURT BUSIEK & CARLOS PACHECO
JESÚS MERINO, INKER • ALEX SINCLAIR, COLOR ARTIST
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT, LETTERS
KRISTY QUINN, ASS'T EDITOR • SCOTT DUNBIER, EDITOR
LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS, ALTERNITY CONSULTANT
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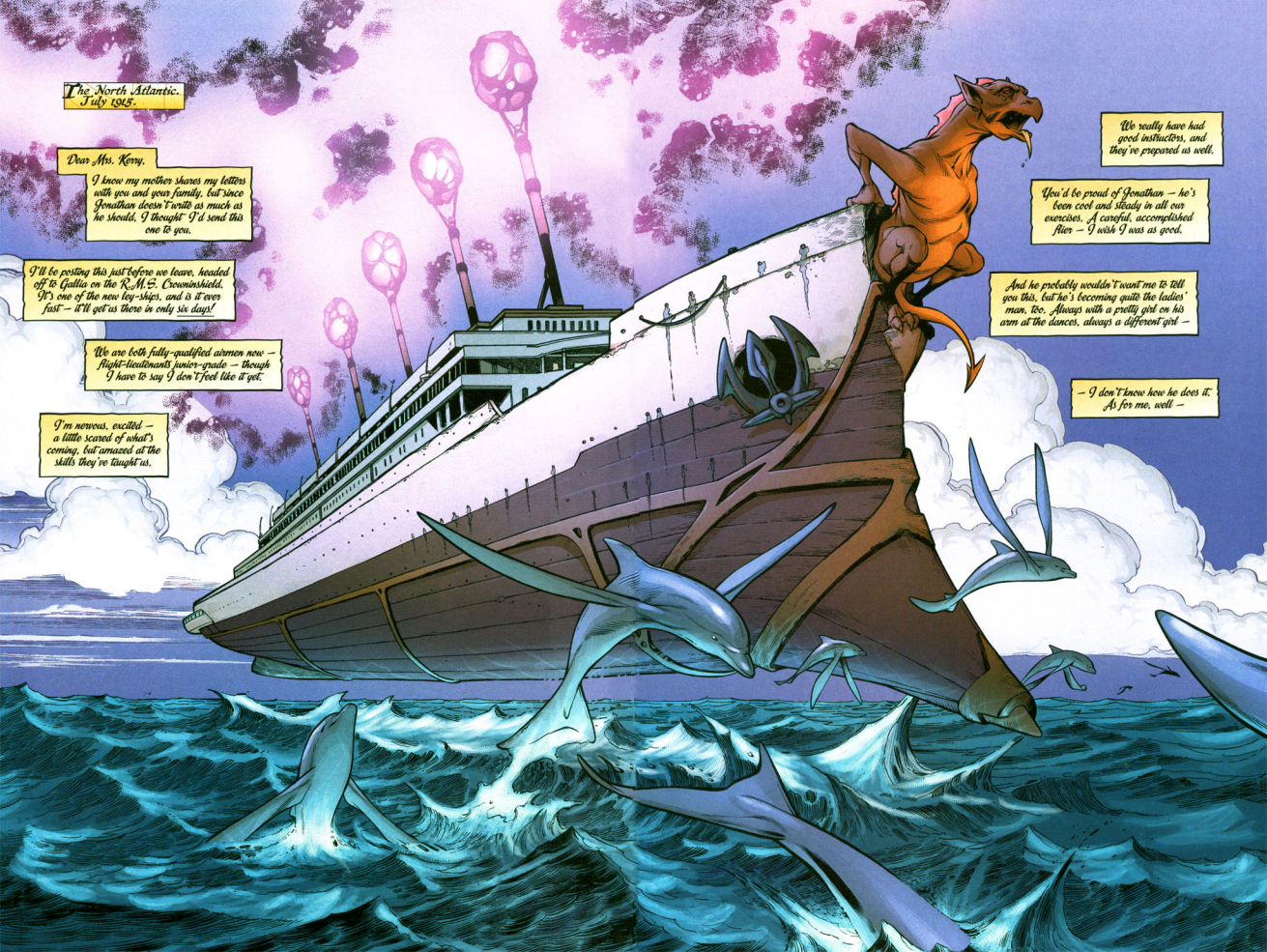
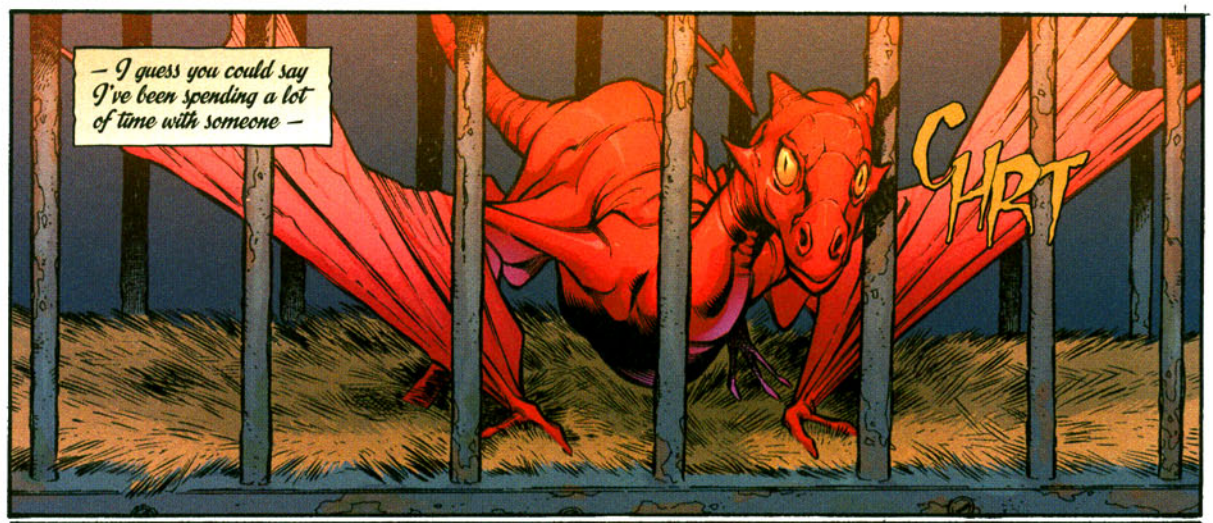
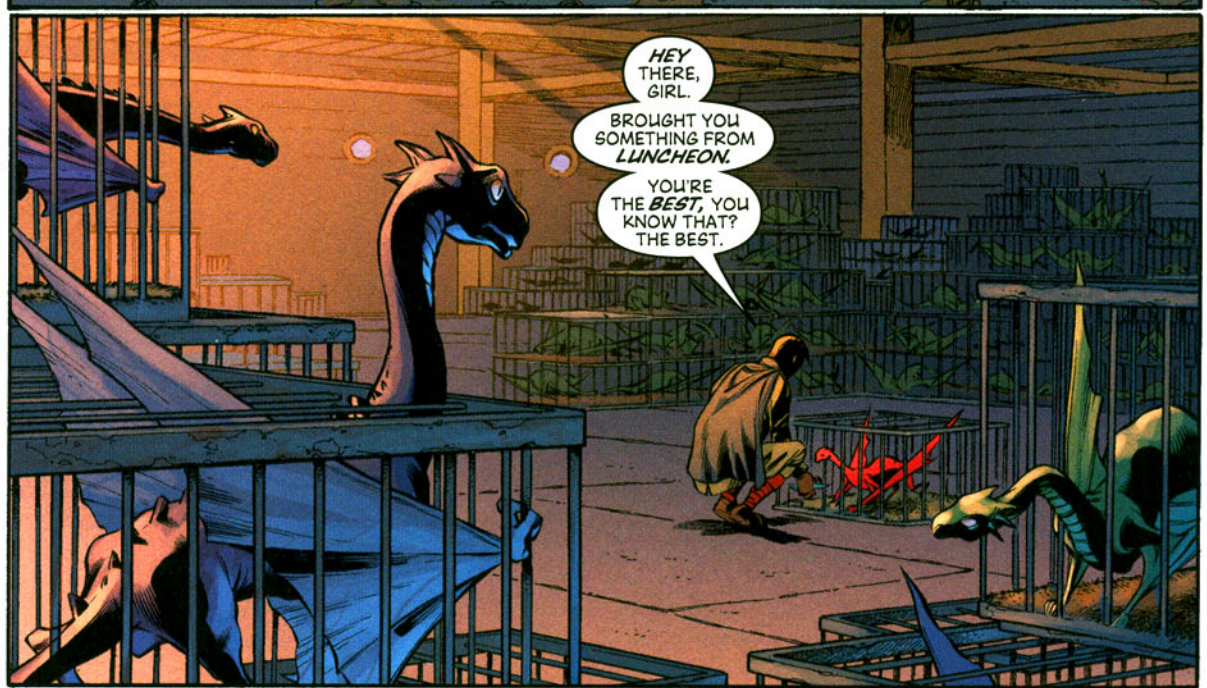
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE ADVENTURER & HERO


The North Atlantic.
July 1915.
Dear Mrs. Kerry,
I know my mother shares my letters with you and your family, but since Jonathan doesn't write as much as he should, I thought I'd send this one to you.
I'll be posting this just before we leave, headed off to Gallia on the R.M.S. Crewminshield. It's one of the new leg-ships, and is it ever fast — it'll get us there in only six days!
We are both fully-qualified airmen now — flight-lieutenants junior-grade — though I have to say I don't feel like it yet.
I'm nervous, excited — a little scared of what's coming, but amazed at the skills they've taught us.
We really have had good instructors, and they've prepared us well.
You'd be proud of Jonathan — he's been cool and steady in all our exercises. A careful, accomplished flier — I wish I was as good.
And he probably wouldn't want me to tell you this, but he's becoming quite the ladies' man, too. Always with a pretty girl on his arm at the dances, always a different girl —
— I don't know how he does it. As for me, well —


— I guess you could say I've been spending a lot of time with someone —
CHRT

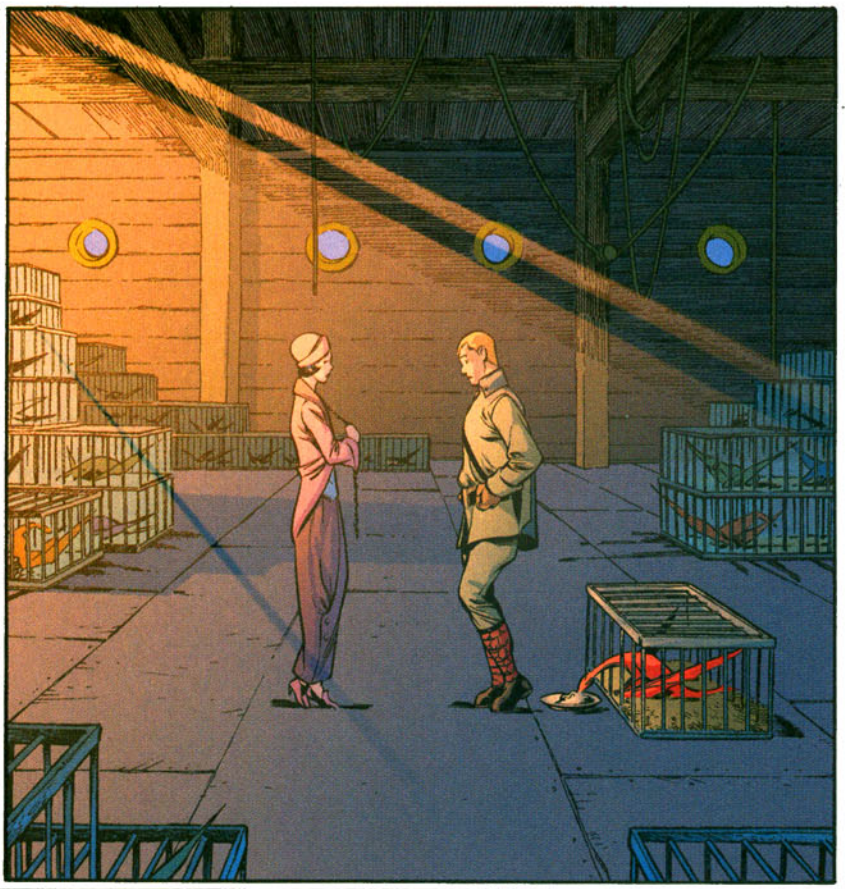

HEY THERE, GIRL.
BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING FROM LUNCHEON.
YOU'RE THE BEST, YOU KNOW THAT? THE BEST.

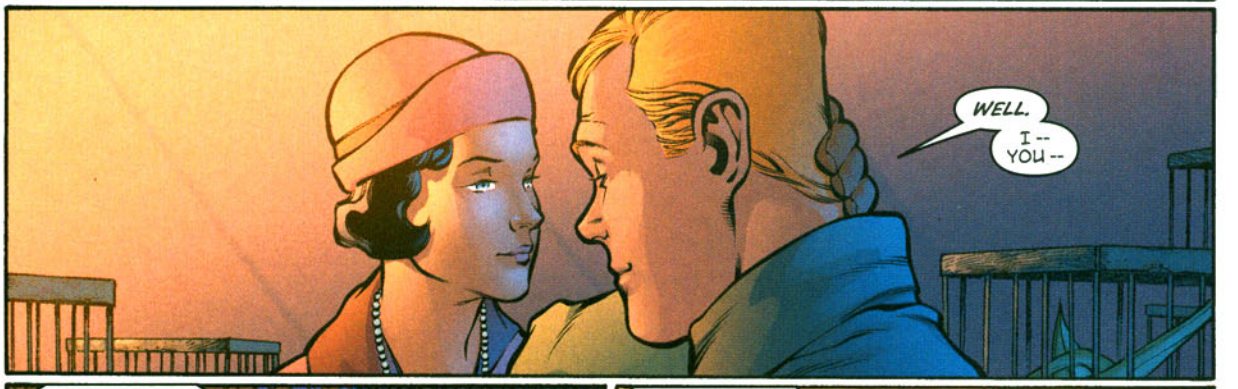
WE STILL HAVE TO FIND A NAME FOR YOU, DON'T WE?
HOW ABOUT "EMILY?" OR "HILDA" -- DO YOU LIKE "HILDA?"
WE HAD A DOG NAMED HILDA WHEN I WAS JUST A KID...
CHRRR

OR WHAT ABOUT "GRACE?"
DO YOU THINK "GRACE" WOULD BE --

FLETCHER?
HM?

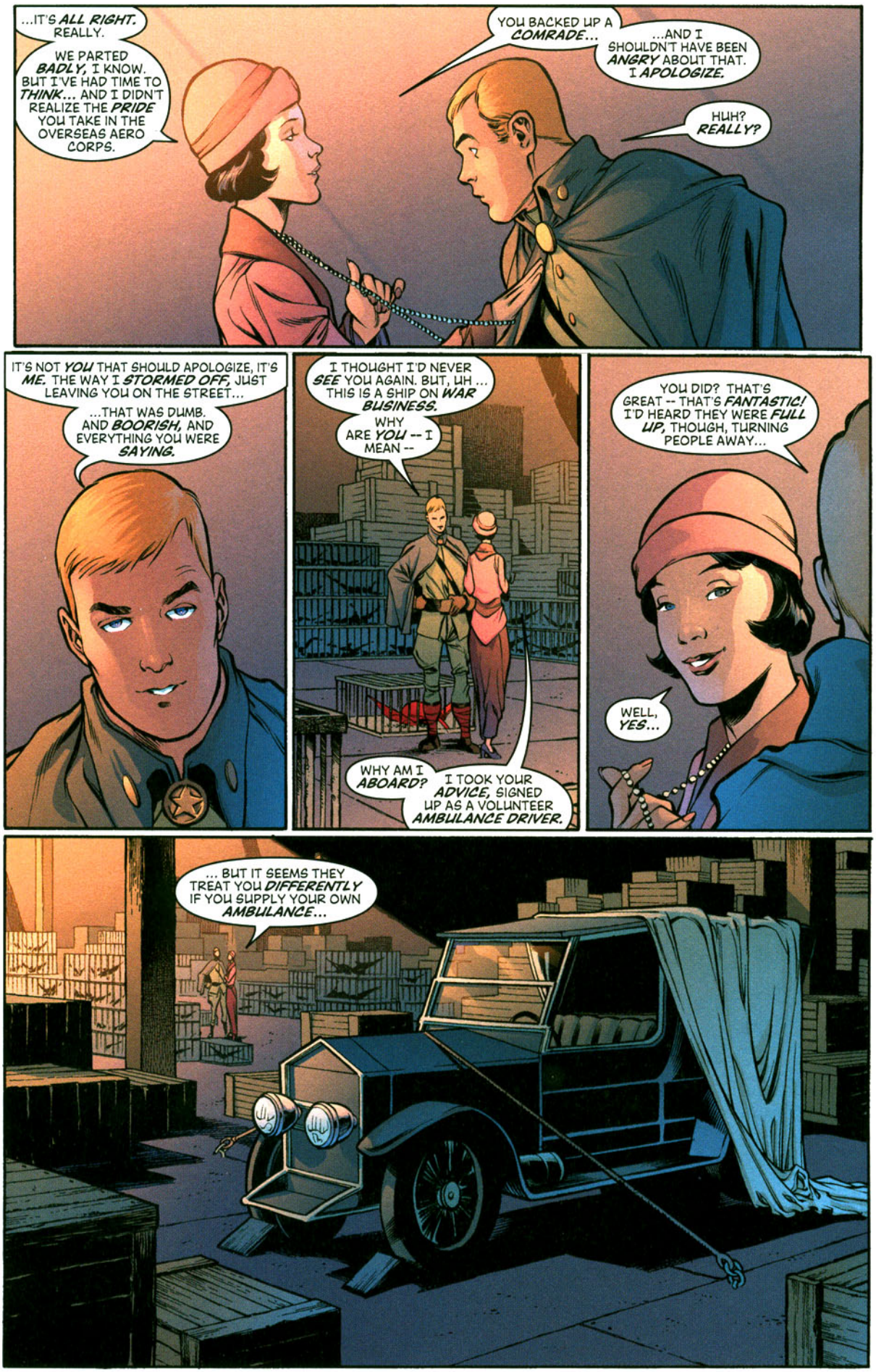
GRACE. GRACE HILLIARD.
THE MYRTLE BEACH HILLIARDS? IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW WEEKS, SURELY YOU --
I, AH --
SORRY, HI -- I'M JUST, UH --

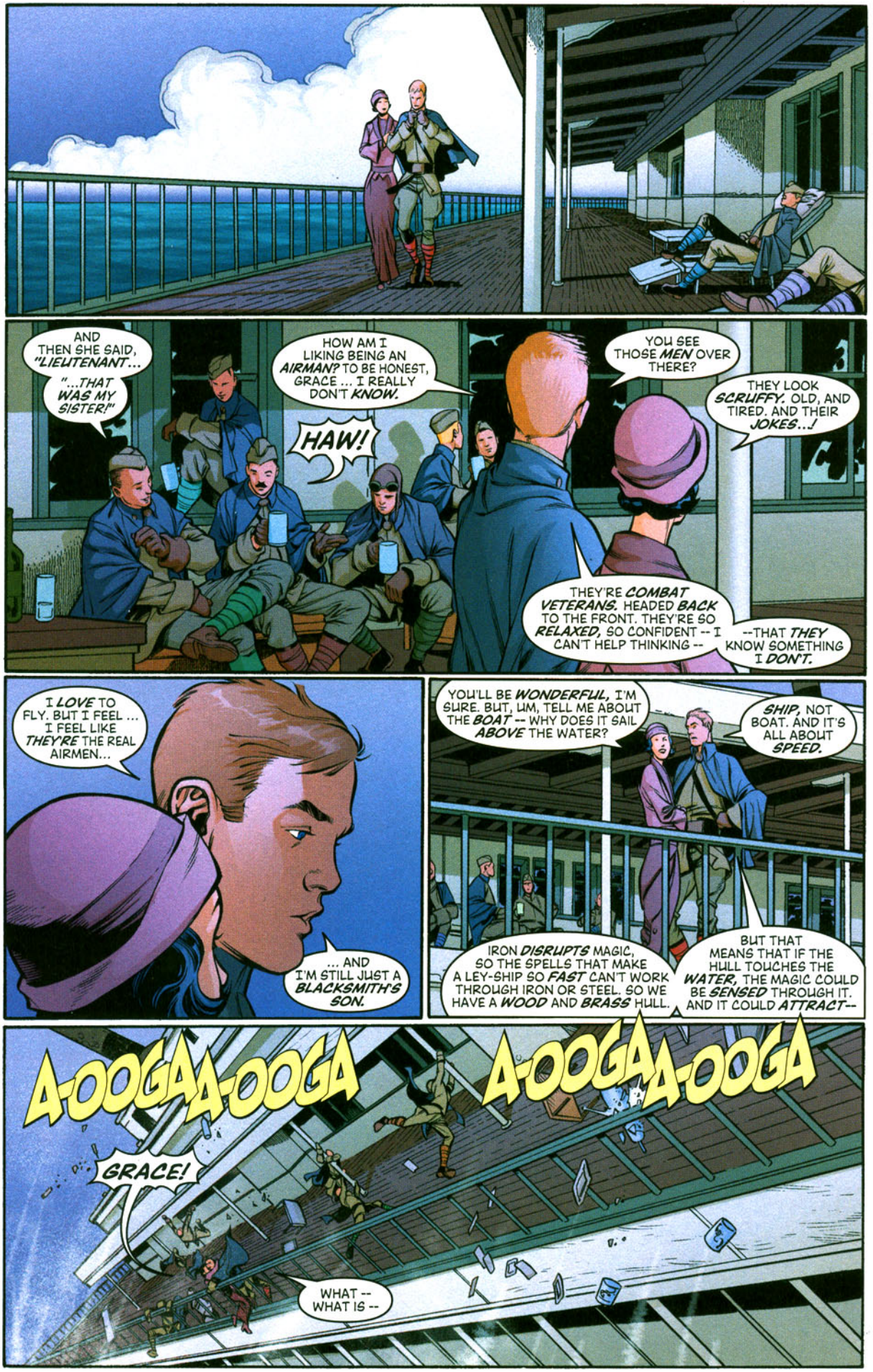


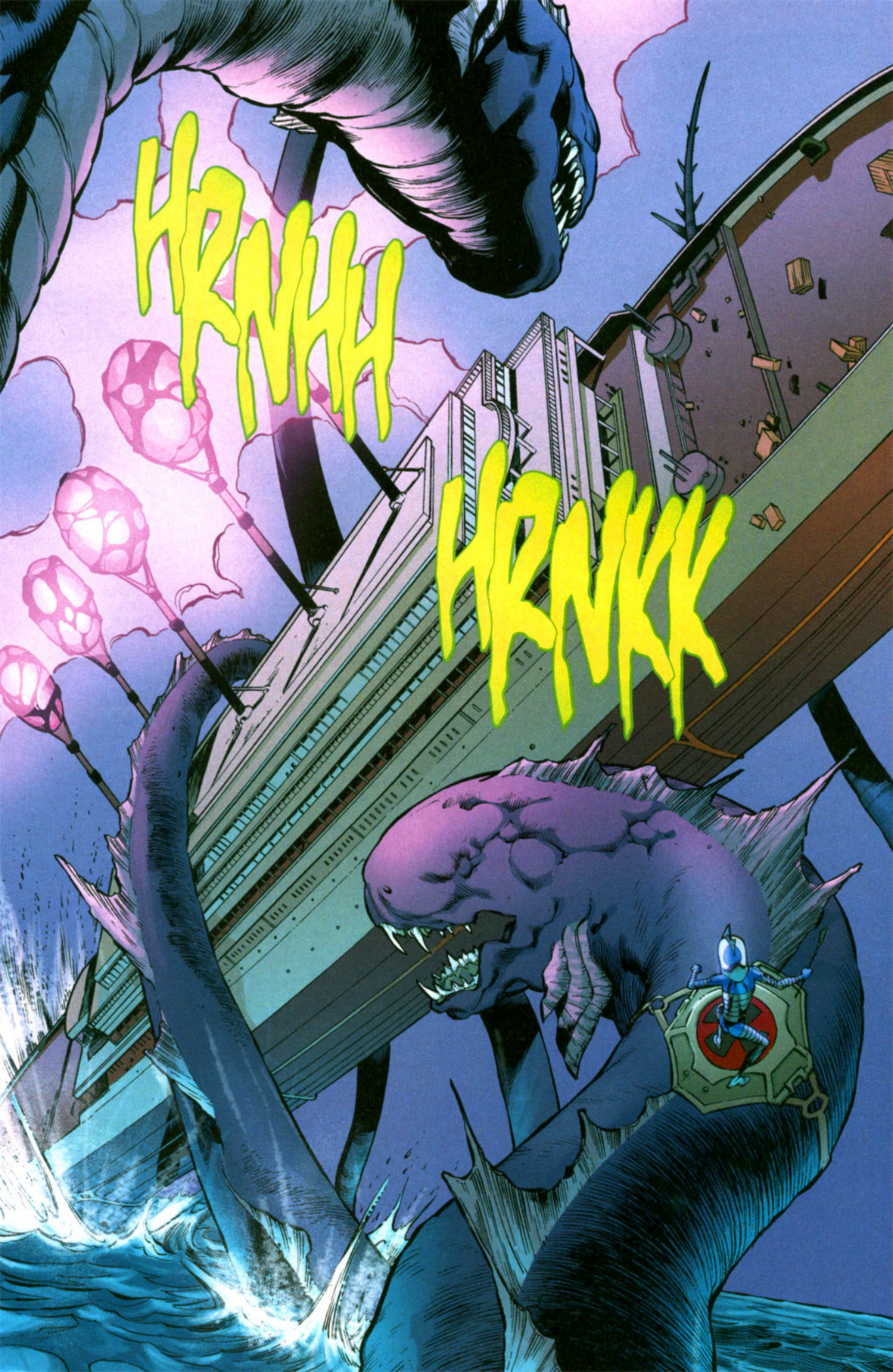

WELL.
I -- YOU --

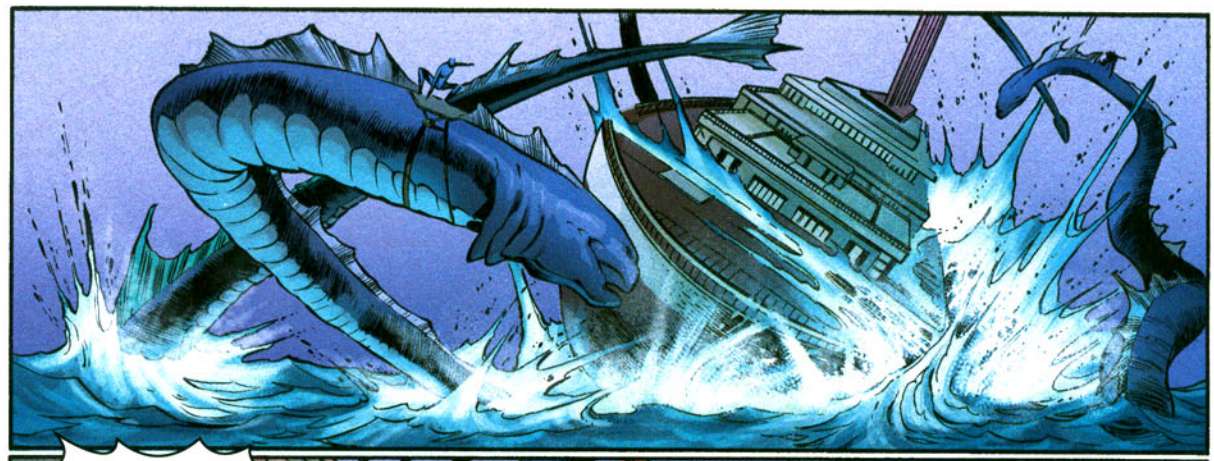
MY DRAGONET! GRACE, MEET ... UH, HILDA! HILDA, GRACE.
CHARMED, HILDA.
THEY ADVISE US TO SPEND TIME WITH OUR DRAGONETS, BOND TO THEM.
THE SPELLS WE CAST BORROW THE DRAGONETS' ABILITY TO FLY, SO WE'RE A TEAM, SORT OF...

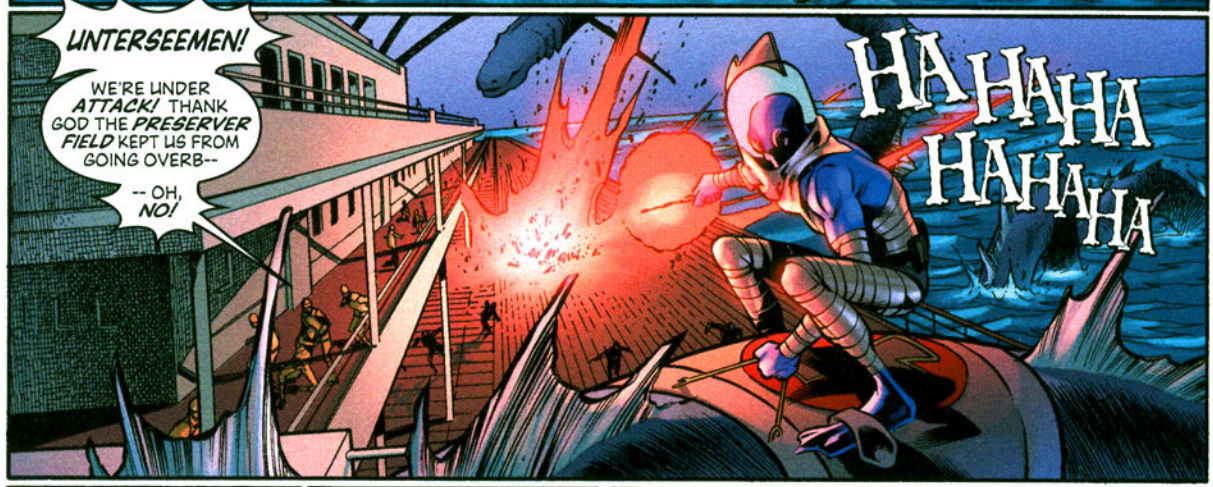
UM ... AND THESE PUTTEES?
THIS IS SKIN THE MOTHER DRAGON SHEDS AFTER GIVING BIRTH, SO THEY HELP CREATE A BOND TOO --
-- BUT I'D KINDA LIKE TO BE FRIENDS AS WELL, SO --
FLETCHER...


...IT'S ALL RIGHT. REALLY.
WE PARTED BADLY, I KNOW. BUT I'VE HAD TIME TO THINK... AND I DIDN'T REALIZE THE PRIDE YOU TAKE IN THE OVERSEAS AERO CORPS.
YOU BACKED UP A COMRADE...
...AND I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANGRY ABOUT THAT. I APOLOGIZE.
HUH? REALLY?
IT'S NOT YOU THAT SHOULD APOLOGIZE, IT'S ME. THE WAY I STORMED OFF, JUST LEAVING YOU ON THE STREET...
...THAT WAS DUMB. AND BOORISH, AND EVERYTHING YOU WERE SAYING.
I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN. BUT, UH ... THIS IS A SHIP ON WAR BUSINESS.
WHY ARE YOU -- I MEAN --
WHY AM I ABOARD?
I TOOK YOUR ADVICE, SIGNED UP AS A VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE DRIVER.
YOU DID? THAT'S GREAT -- THAT'S FANTASTIC! I'D HEARD THEY WERE FULL UP, THOUGH, TURNING PEOPLE AWAY...
WELL, YES...
... BUT IT SEEMS THEY TREAT YOU DIFFERENTLY IF YOU SUPPLY YOUR OWN AMBULANCE...


AND THEN SHE SAID, "LIEUTENANT...
"...THAT WAS MY SISTER!"
HOW AM I LIKING BEING AN AIRMAN? TO BE HONEST, GRACE ... I REALLY DON'T KNOW.
HAW!
YOU SEE THOSE MEN OVER THERE?
THEY LOOK SCRUFFY. OLD, AND TIRED. AND THEIR JOKES...!
THEY'RE COMBAT VETERANS. HEADED BACK TO THE FRONT. THEY'RE SO RELAXED, SO CONFIDENT -- I CAN'T HELP THINKING --
--THAT THEY KNOW SOMETHING I DON'T.
I LOVE TO FLY. BUT I FEEL ... I FEEL LIKE THEY'RE THE REAL AIRMEN...
... AND I'M STILL JUST A BLACKSMITH'S SON.
YOU'LL BE WONDERFUL, I'M SURE. BUT, UM, TELL ME ABOUT THE BOAT -- WHY DOES IT SAIL ABOVE THE WATER?
SHIP, NOT BOAT. AND IT'S ALL ABOUT SPEED.
IRON DISRUPTS MAGIC, SO THE SPELLS THAT MAKE A LEY-SHIP SO FAST CAN'T WORK THROUGH IRON OR STEEL. SO WE HAVE A WOOD AND BRASS HULL.
BUT THAT MEANS THAT IF THE HULL TOUCHES THE WATER, THE MAGIC COULD BE SENSED THROUGH IT. AND IT COULD ATTRACT--
A-OOGA A-OOGA
A-OOGA A-OOGA
GRACE!
WHAT -- WHAT IS --


HRNHH
HRNKK




UNTERSEEMEN!
WE'RE UNDER ATTACK! THANK GOD THE PRESERVER FIELD KEPT US FROM GOING OVERB--
-- OH, NO!
HAHAHA HAHAHA

SQUAD ROLAND! IN THE AIR! IN THE AIR!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES WITH FULLY-CHARGED FLIGHT CHIPS --
-- THIS ONE'S YOURS!

I GUESS ... THIS IS IT, JON ... IT'S UP TO US...
YEAH!
ACTION AT LAST! I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER --

OUTTA THE WAY, LADIES! LET CAPABLE AIRMEN DO THEIR JOBS!

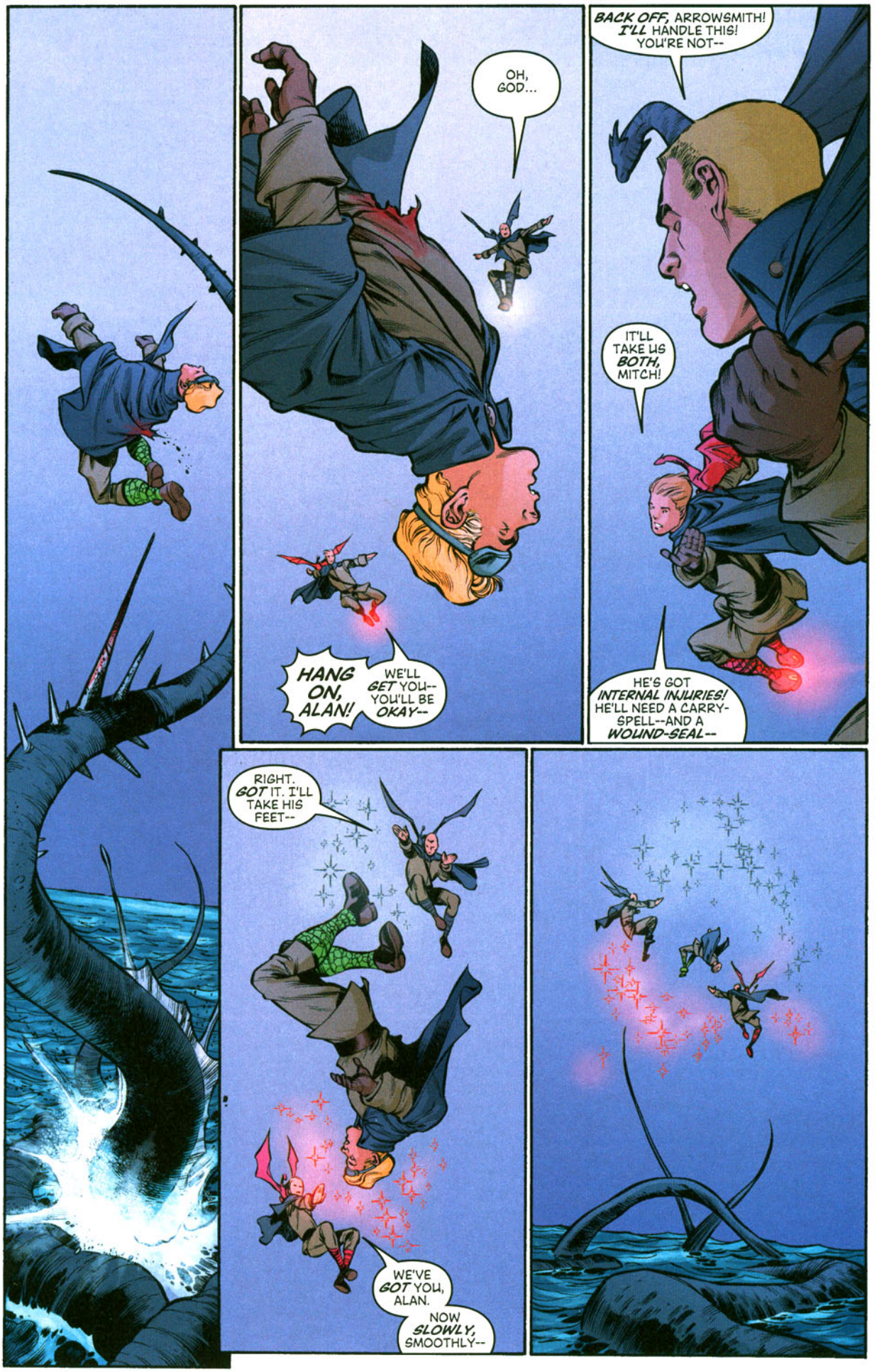
MITCH.
THAT MUSCLEBRAINED SACK OF --
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, FLETCHER. HE'S A JERK.
LET'S JUST --

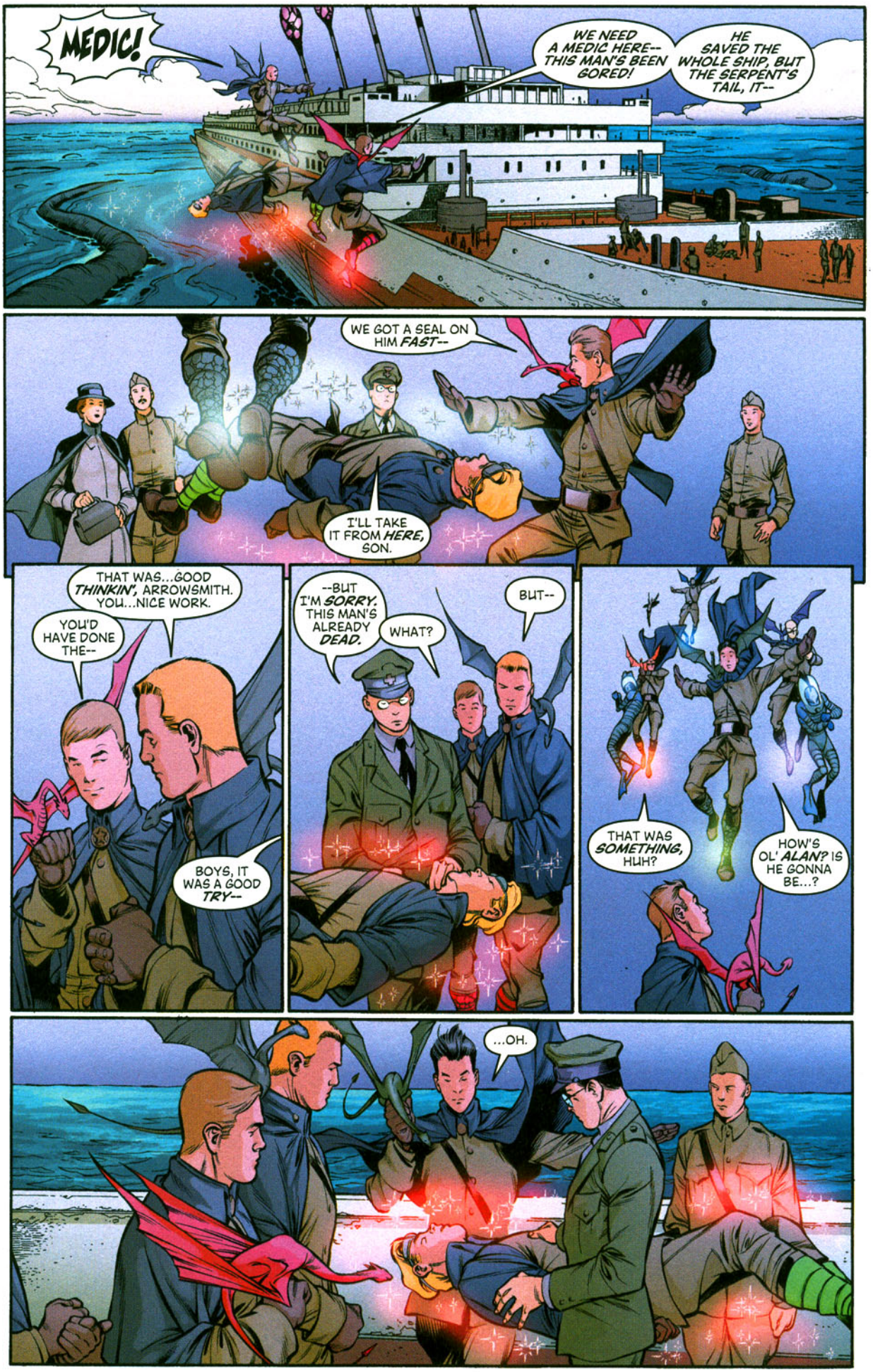
HRAHH
POOM
POOM POOM
BOYS! BOYS! YOU WON'T STOP 'EM THAT WAY!
HERE --

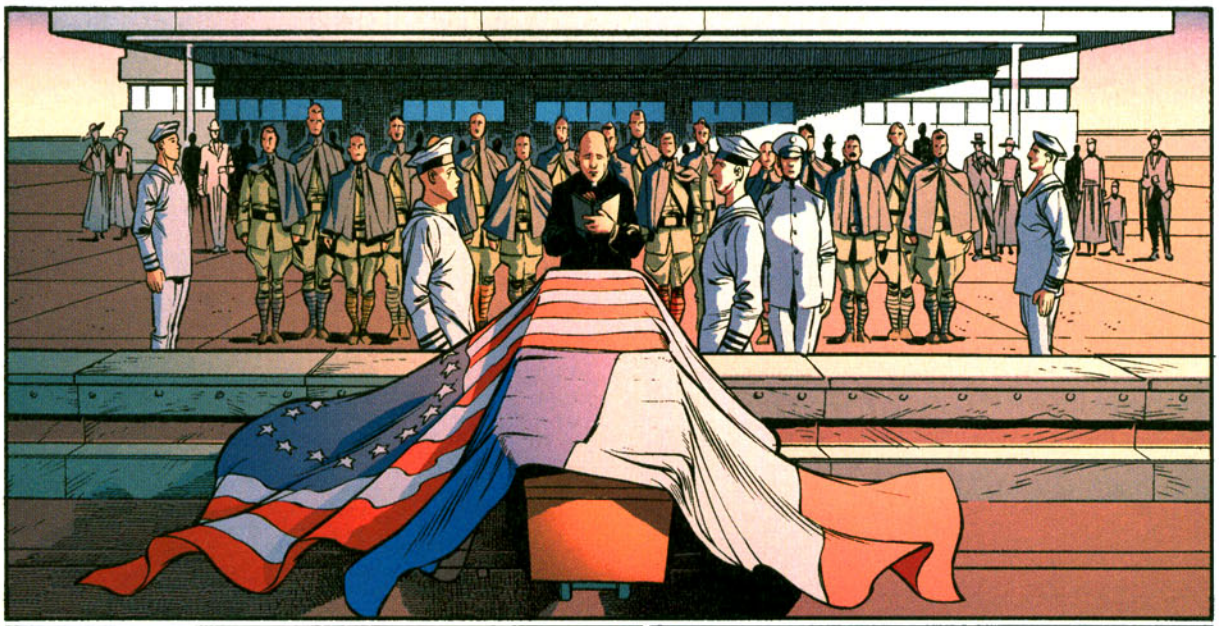
-- TAKE THESE! A DOZEN PRANA-GRENADES IN EACH SATCHEL! THE SERPENTS ARE ARMORED ON THE OUTSIDE -- TOO TOUGH FOR OUR CROSSBOW QUARRELS --
-- BUT INSIDE --
BAM
HOAH
OKAY, OKAY -- I CAN --
BAM
I DID IT! I DID IT! YOU SEE THAT, FLETCHER-BOY? I GOT ONE!

HMM.
SMARTENED UP, HAS HE? NOT GOING TO BE TAKEN BY THE SAME TRICK?
AAA!
WHOA!
CH-CH-CH-CH!
DON'T WORRY, MATILDA, WE'LL GET HIM. MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A CAT.
WE'LL SWOOP AROUND, COME AT HIM FROM STARBOARD REAR --
PTAK
PTAK
AND --
HR
PERFECT!

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT!
I GREW UP IN THE *MARITIMES,* BOYS -- WE LEARNED HOW TO DEAL WITH --
ALAN!
ALAN, *BEHIND* YOU!
ALAN, *MOVE!*
BEHIND --


OH, GOD...
HANG ON, ALAN!
WE'LL GET YOU-- YOU'LL BE OKAY--
BACK OFF, ARROWSMITH! I'LL HANDLE THIS! YOU'RE NOT--
IT'LL TAKE US BOTH, MITCH!
HE'S GOT INTERNAL INJURIES! HE'LL NEED A CARRY-SPELL--AND A WOUND-SEAL--
RIGHT. GOT IT. I'LL TAKE HIS FEET--
WE'VE GOT YOU, ALAN.
NOW SLOWLY, SMOOTHLY--

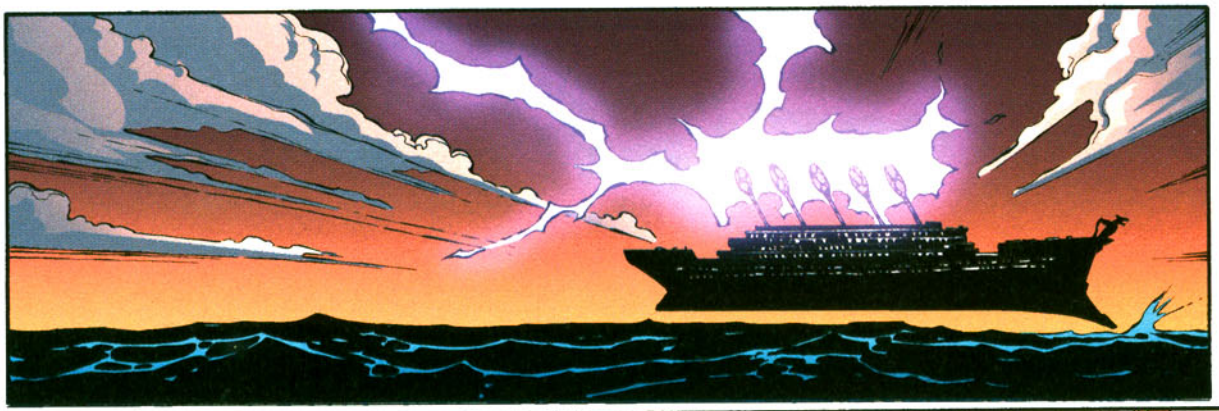

MEDIC!
WE NEED A MEDIC HERE-- THIS MAN'S BEEN GORED!
HE SAVED THE WHOLE SHIP, BUT THE SERPENT'S TAIL, IT--
WE GOT A SEAL ON HIM FAST--
I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, SON.
THAT WAS...GOOD THINKIN', ARROWSMITH. YOU...NICE WORK.
YOU'D HAVE DONE THE--
BOYS, IT WAS A GOOD TRY--
--BUT I'M SORRY. THIS MAN'S ALREADY DEAD.
WHAT?
BUT--
THAT WAS SOMETHING, HUH?
HOW'S OL' ALAN? IS HE GONNA BE...?
...OH.

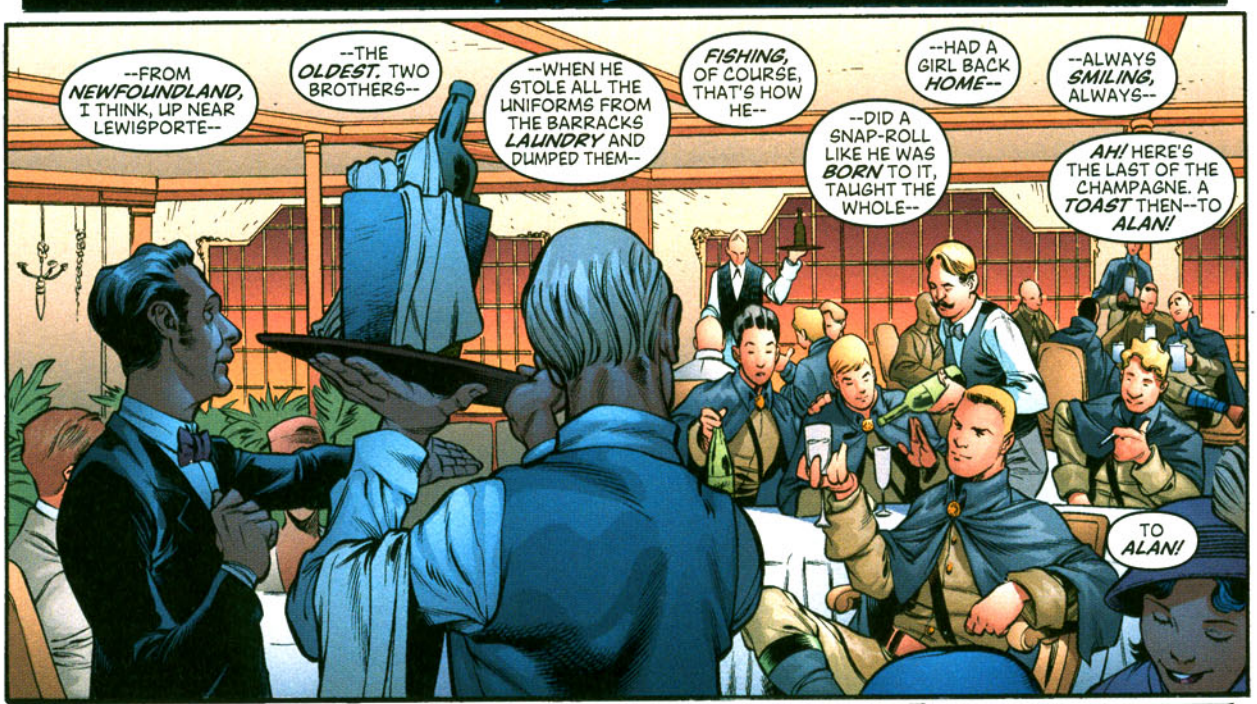


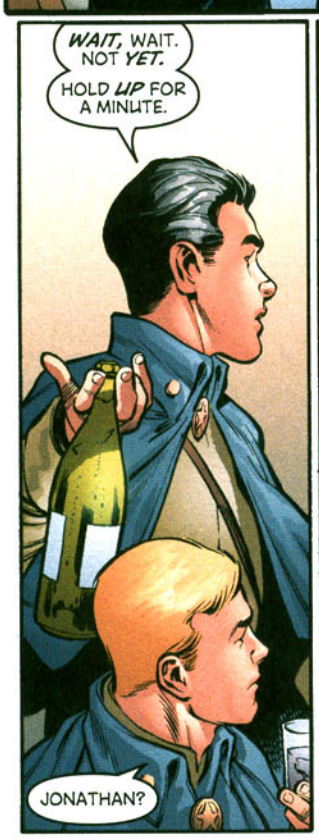
...WITH THE GRATEFUL THANKS OF TWO NATIONS...AND MORE...FOR HIS BRAVERY AND SACRIFICE.
WE COMMEND TO ALMIGHTY GOD OUR BROTHER ALAN BOTWOOD...

...AND WE COMMIT HIS BODY TO THE DEEP.

ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST.
THE LORD BLESS HIM AND KEEP HIM.




--FROM NEWFOUNDLAND, I THINK, UP NEAR LEWISPORTE--
--THE OLDEST. TWO BROTHERS--
--WHEN HE STOLE ALL THE UNIFORMS FROM THE BARRACKS LAUNDRY AND DUMPED THEM--
FISHING, OF COURSE, THAT'S HOW HE--
--DID A SNAP-ROLL LIKE HE WAS BORN TO IT, TAUGHT THE WHOLE--
--HAD A GIRL BACK HOME--
--ALWAYS SMILING, ALWAYS--
AH! HERE'S THE LAST OF THE CHAMPAGNE. A TOAST THEN--TO ALAN!
TO ALAN!


WAIT, WAIT. NOT YET.
HOLD UP FOR A MINUTE.
JONATHAN?

EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN.
I KNOW YOU'VE SEEN MORE ACTION THAN WE HAVE, BUT ONE OF OUR NUMBER FELL TODAY, PRESERVING THE LIVES OF ALL ABOARD THIS SHIP.
WE'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN A TOAST TO HIS MEMORY.

A WHAT?
ONE OF YOU DOWNY CHICKS GOT ET BY THE CAT, AND YOU WANT US TO HELP YOU WAIL? COME BACK WHEN YOU'VE--

NO, SHELBURNE, DON'T. WE'RE HONORED BY YOUR KIND INVITATION, LIEUTENANT, WE ACCEPT.

WILDSTORM NEWS

SEPTEMBER

THE LIFE EATERS

ON SALE 10/8

It is a sad fact that evil sometimes prevails. Isn't that why we feel a creepy fascination with how close the Nazis came to winning World War II? What horror could have been more chilling? Our home-grown human monsters are far worse than fictional vampires or alien invaders. Still, I never really swallowed the notion that "the Nazis almost won." This is the universe where they got amazing breaks – letting Hitler's gang of lunatics rule and pervert a great nation, they unleashed horror on a planet.

Especially weird was their romantic obsession with the occult – wonderfully portrayed by Stephen Spielberg in "Raiders of the Lost Ark." Might there have been even more to this fixation – to their well-documented mysticism – than we ever knew? In a more general sense, are there secret, magical ways to transform the world? If such mad ambitions ever came true, how would normal people – armed only with skill and courage – manage to fight back?

THE LIFE EATERS is a dark imagining – yet one that's filled with hope. And thanks to the glorious artwork of Scott Hampton, it may also be one of the most beautifully vivid tales in a very long time.

– David Brin

If THE LIFE EATERS has you thirsty for more diverse projects, be sure to check out TWO-STEP (on-sale 10/8) and KAMIKAZE (on-sale 10/15). TWO-STEP is the tale of a Zen gangster and the cam-girl on his trail, brought to you by Warren Ellis, Amanda Conner, and Jimmy Palmiotti. KAMIKAZE is the story of a group of extreme sports athletes hunting for the greatest game of all...brought to you by Humberto "Spider-Man" Ramos, Francisco "Venom" Herrera and Olallo Rubio!

WILDSTORM

The Authority Vol.2 #5

Extinction Event #3

Gen13 #13

Robotech: Love and War #4

Robotech: The Macross Saga #4

Stormwatch #15

Sleeper #9

Thundercats: Dogs of War #4

Wildcats: Version 3.0 #14

ABC

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Vol. 2 #6

Promethea #27

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Terrific Tales #8

Terra Obscura #4

Tom Strong #22

Tom Strong Book II TPB

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Red #3

Zero Girl: Full Circle TPB

CLIFFHANGER

Arrowsmith #3

Tokyo Storm Warning #3

The Possessed #3

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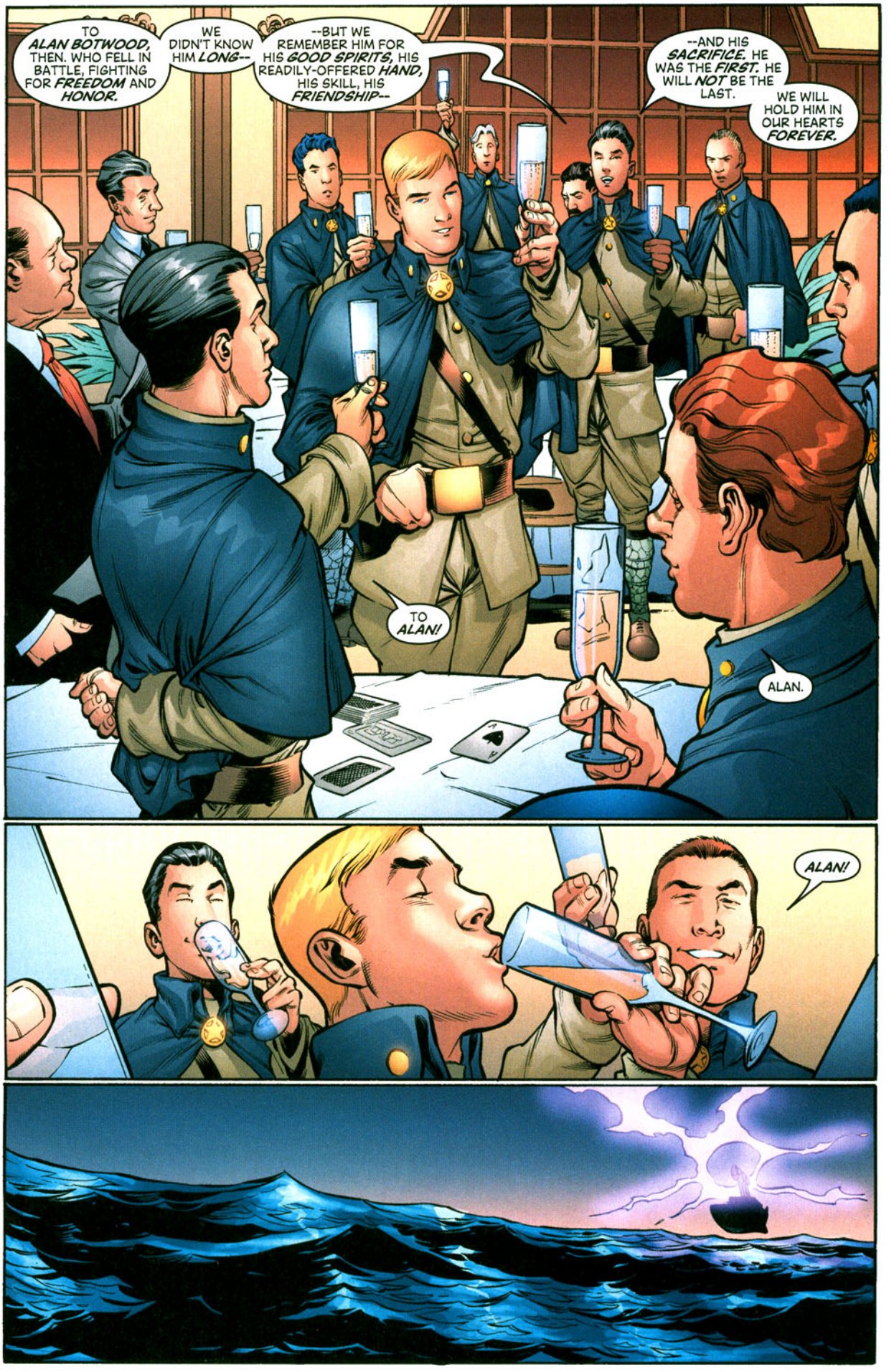
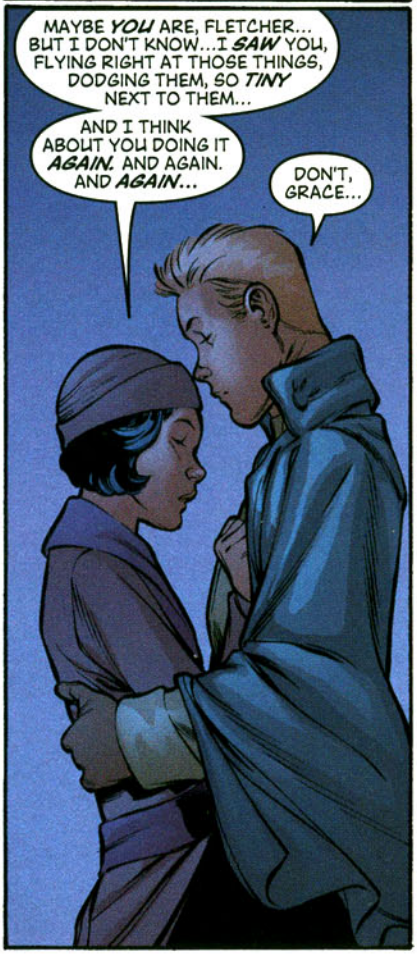

TO ALAN BOTWOOD, THEN. WHO FELL IN BATTLE, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM AND HONOR.
WE DIDN'T KNOW HIM LONG--
--BUT WE REMEMBER HIM FOR HIS GOOD SPIRITS, HIS READILY-OFFERED HAND, HIS SKILL, HIS FRIENDSHIP--
--AND HIS SACRIFICE. HE WAS THE FIRST. HE WILL NOT BE THE LAST.
WE WILL HOLD HIM IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER.
TO ALAN!
ALAN.
ALAN!

THEY SAY IT'S DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE, GRACE, NOBODY KNOWS WHERE. WE COULD BE PASSING RIGHT OVER IT NOW.
HM?
ATLANTIS. SUNKEN ATLANTIS, THE BIRTHPLACE OF MAGIC. I WONDER...
...I WONDER IF ALAN WILL FIND IT...

I KNOW HE WAS A FRIEND OF YOURS. JUST THE OTHER DAY, YOU WERE THROWING ROLLS AT EACH OTHER AT BREAKFAST. AND NOW...
IS THIS... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, FLETCHER?
YOU KNOW...

...I THINK I AM.
WHAT HAPPENED TODAY WAS TERRIBLE. AWFUL. BUT I'M NOT WORRIED ANY MORE, NOT ABOUT BEING ABLE TO HANDLE IT.
I'VE FACED COMBAT, AND I DIDN'T FREEZE. I CAN DO IT.

THE WHOLE PATROL HAS FACED DEATH NOW, KNOWN LOSS. AND WE'D ALL GIVE ANYTHING TO HAVE ALAN BACK.
BUT WE LIVED, AND THAT MEANS SOMETHING.
I'M STEADIER. JONATHAN'S STEADIER.
EVEN MITCH IS DIFFERENT.


MAYBE YOU ARE, FLETCHER... BUT I DON'T KNOW...I SAW YOU, FLYING RIGHT AT THOSE THINGS, DODGING THEM, SO TINY NEXT TO THEM...
AND I THINK ABOUT YOU DOING IT AGAIN. AND AGAIN. AND AGAIN...
DON'T, GRACE...

DON'T.

Dear Winnie. Well, we got here.
We arrived in La Havre today. I was in New Jersey a week ago, and now I'm in Europe. Can you believe it?
Le Havre's a very pretty harbor town, you'd like it. They had a welcoming ceremony for us — the mayor, the press, some others.
They seemed a little bored, though — I think they've done a lot of them.
Grace had to catch a train, to ship her ambulance to Paris, and from there to the front. I told you about her, you'd like her too.
It's a shame she couldn't stay. They're having a kind of party for us — dinner, dancing, and I bet there'll be some speeches —
WRITE ME, CARE OF THE V.A.S.-- IT'LL FIND ME, EVENTUALLY!
HAVE A SAFE TRIP!
— and then we fly to Beauvis, where we'll be split up, and sent to our permanent assignments. That's when the job really starts!

EVERYBODY UP!
ROLL OUT! ROLL OUT! DAWN PATROL IN FIVE MINUTES!

NNH... WHAT TIME IS...
WAIT... PATROL? BEFORE BREAKFAST?
YOU EAT WHEN YOU GET BACK! THIS IS DAWN PATROL!
DAWN PATROL!
'KAY... OKAY...

STAY ALERT!
AND ROLL OUT FASTER NEXT TIME!
IT ISN'T CALLED DAWN PATROL FOR FUN!

≡HHHH!≡
HAD TOO MUCH WINE AT THAT PARTY... ALL FUZZY...
I TOLD YOU, JON. YOU COULD BARELY FLY, BUT--

HUH?
WHAT? WHERE'S EVERYONE G--

LOOK LIVELY, LADS!
PRUSSIANS!
CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM
LOOK OUT! HERE THEY--
CHOOM
AHH! SO LOUD-- BRIGHT--!
WHERE'S--
MITCH?!
CHOOM

Crook Crook
TOO FAST--I CAN'T--
TOO--
FRAMM
JONATHAN! JONATHAN!
FORM UP, BACK TO BACK! WATCH EACH OTHER! WE CAN GET THROUGH THIS! WE CAN--
OH DEAR GOD IN HEAVEN.
JONATHAN--?!
Next: THE MEN WILL CHEER, THE BOYS WILL SHOUT...

BUSIEK & PACHECO

Arrowsmith™

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Issue 4 · No Man's Land Number · January 2004

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• CONTINUING THE SAGA OF •

Arrowsmith

• CHAPTER FOUR •
LA VIE EN ESCADRILLE

War rages in Europe, between the Central Powers — Tyrolia-Hungary, Prussia, Bavaria and their allies — and the forces of Gallia, Britannia, Muscovy, Naples and others. Nations throw men, creatures, and all that sorcery and technology can offer into the fray.

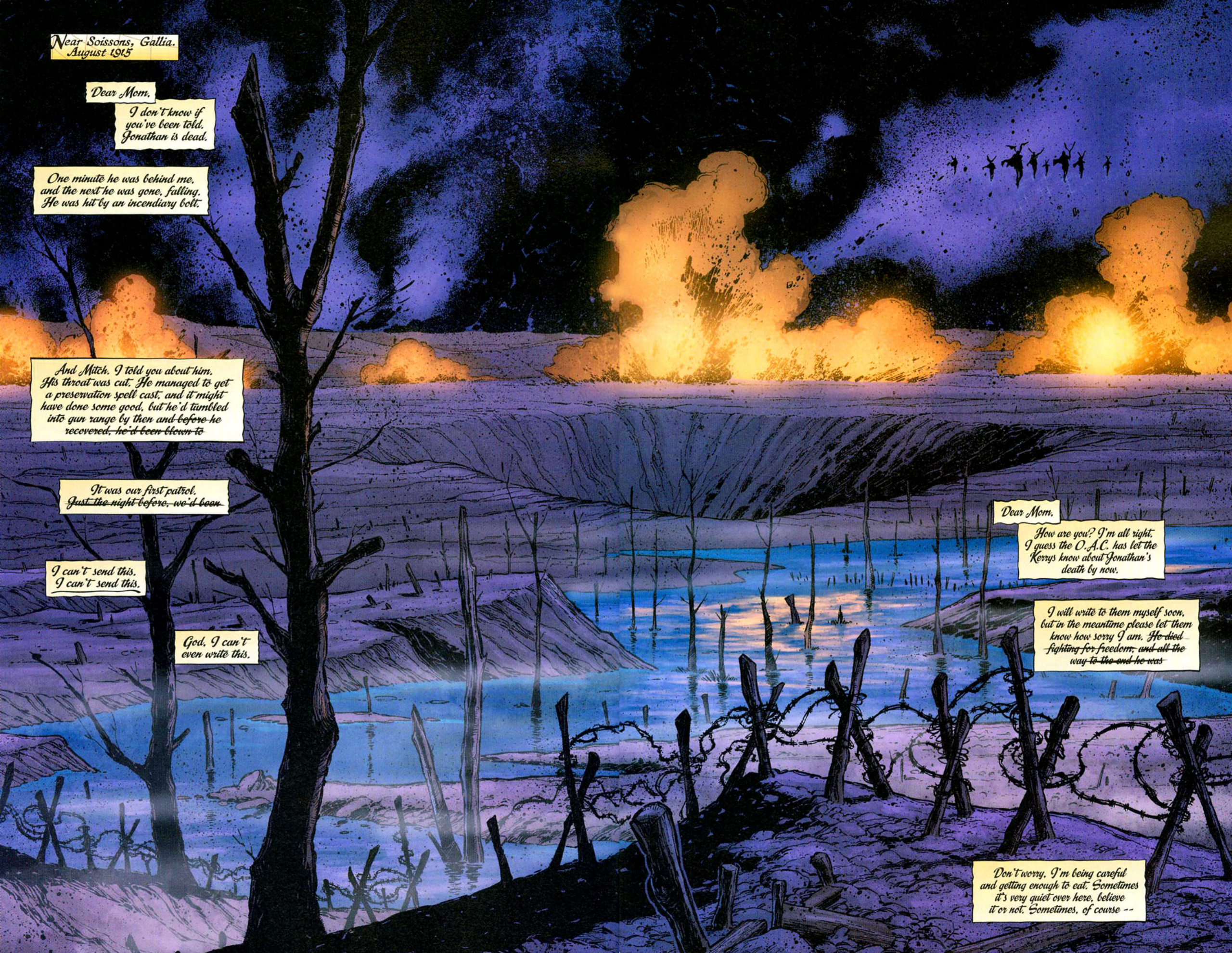
One combatant is young Fletcher Arrowsmith, late of Herbertsville, Connecticut, in the United States of Columbia. After hearing tales of the war from Rocky, a rock-troll refugee who works at his father's blacksmith shop, Fletcher and his best friend, Jonathan, join the Overseas Aero Corps, a volunteer group of airmen who are trained in the sorceries of flight to make them each nation's hawks of the air.

Fletcher and Jonathan are swiftly trained in their new skills, and shipped over to Gallia, where they are desperately needed. In the process, they make friends and enemies, including Grace Hilliard, volunteer ambulance driver and daughter of an industrial-magic magnate, and Mitch Taggart, a belligerent fellow trainee.

At long last, Fletcher and Jonathan arrive at the front, and their first real mission as airmen. But things do not go as expected. Not remotely as expected...

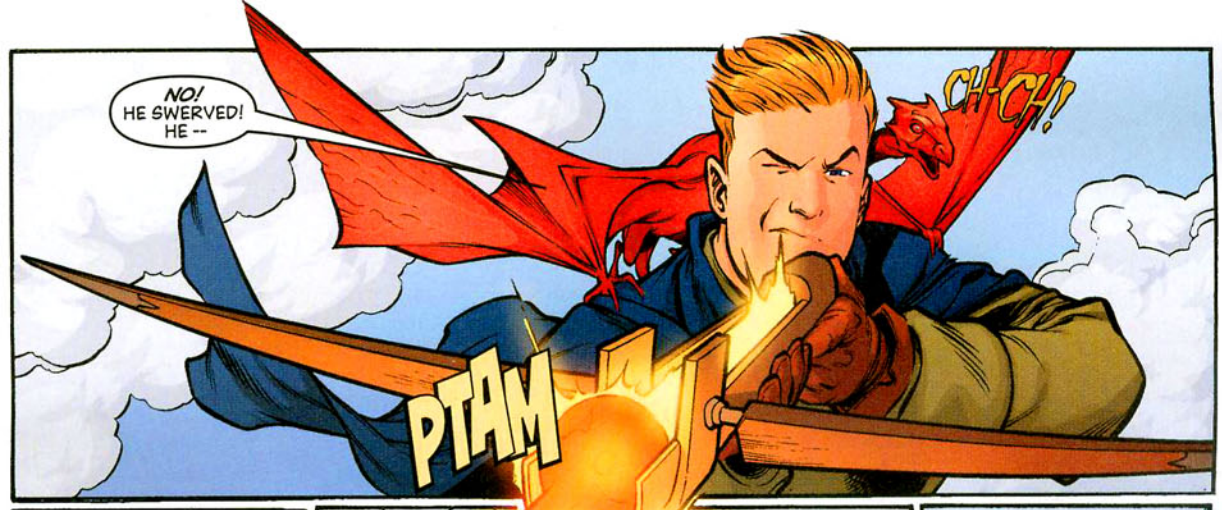
BY KURT BUSIEK & CARLOS PACHECO
JESÚS MERINO, INKER • ALEX SINCLAIR, COLOR ARTIST
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT, LETTERS
KRISTY QUINN, ASS'T EDITOR • SCOTT DUNBIER, EDITOR
LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS, ALTERNITY CONSULTANT
COMICRAFT'S JG ROSHELL, DESIGN & ROB STEEN, CARTOGRAPHER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE ADVENTURER & HERO


Near Soissons, Gallia.
August 1915
Dear Mom.
I don't know if you've been told. Jonathan is dead.
One minute he was behind me, and the next he was gone, falling. He was hit by an incendiary bolt.
And Mitch. I told you about him. His throat was cut. He managed to get a preservation spell cast, and it might have done some good, but he'd tumbled into gun range by then and ~~before he recovered, he'd been blown to~~
It was our first patrol. ~~Just the night before, we'd been~~
I can't send this. I can't send this.
God. I can't even write this.
Dear Mom.
How are you? I'm all right. I guess the O.A.C. has let the Kerrys know about Jonathan's death by now.
I will write to them myself soon, but in the meantime please let them know how sorry I am. ~~He died fighting for freedom, and all the way to the end he was~~
Don't worry. I'm being careful and getting enough to eat. Sometimes it's very quiet over here, believe it or not. Sometimes, of course --

-- it's not.
AAAAAAA
We're doing something worthwhile, though. Something that matters.
But it's not like I thought it would be. It's not like I thought it would be at all.
AHH!
JOHNSON? JOHNSON?!
We fly and we die and we fly again and it never ends and I had no idea I wasn't ready and I dream about Jonathan and
Damn it.
Damn it damn it damn it.
MY SWORD -- I DROPPED MY --
C'MON, HILDA, WE CAN DO THIS. JUST HOLD IT TOGETHER DON'T PANIC -- WE KNOW WHICH WAY IS DOWN WE CAN ORIENT KEEP FOCUSED --
WATCH OUR BACK WATCH ABOVE AND BELOW --

EYES LOOSE, EVERYONE! STAY ALERT!
GOODHEART, BARRON -- THERE'S A HOLE LEEWARD AND ABOVE!
EDWARDS, BEHIND AND BELOW -- FIVE O'CLOCK!
DAVIS --
HSSSSS
KYHHHH
HAH!
DENKST DU DASS DU EINEN KURVVENKAMPF MIT DEN ALTEN VON DER FLIEGERABTEILUNG 263 MACHEN KANNST UND NOCH LEBST? BLÖDSINNIGER AKADIANER!
AHH!
UND JETZT, NARR, SCHLAG' ICH KRÖGERS REKORD--
AH! AH! AH!
ARROWSMITH!
HELP DAVIS -- YOU'RE CLOSEST!
Y-YESSIR! I GOT HIM, I GOT --


NO! HE SWERVED! HE --
CH-CH!
PTAM

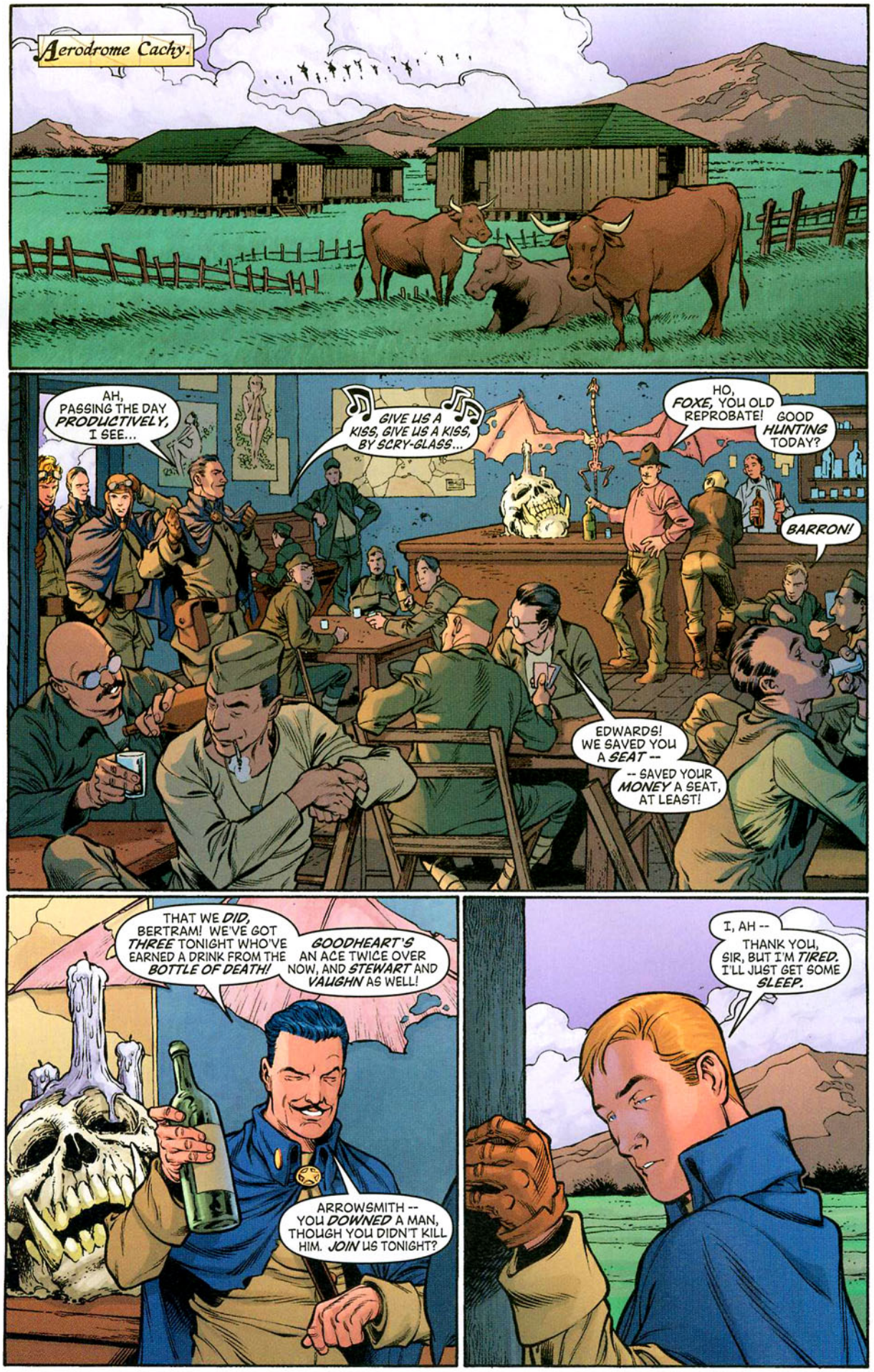
FRAM
V-VAS...?

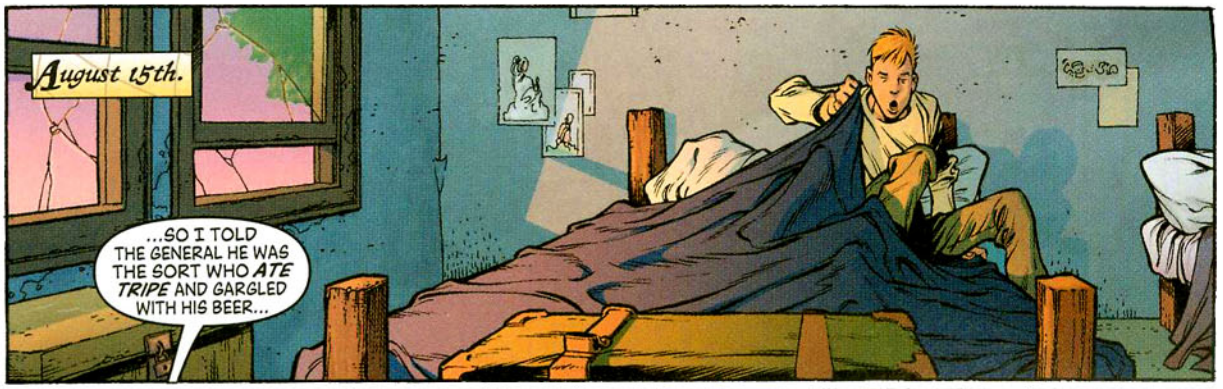
AAAAAAAAAA

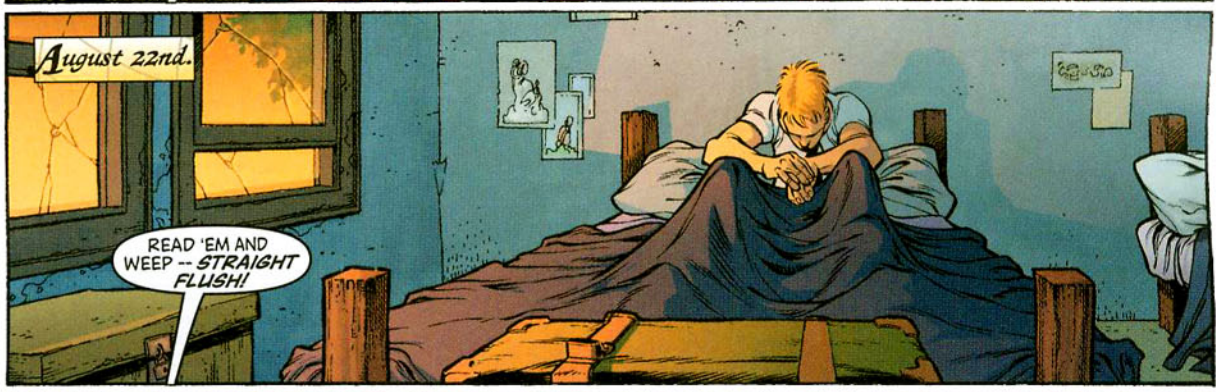
NOT SO SMUG NOW, YOU SAUERKRAUT-FOR-BRAINS BASTARD, EH?
JUST HOLD THAT POSE, CHUMMY, WHILE I BLOW YOU INTO A MILLION --

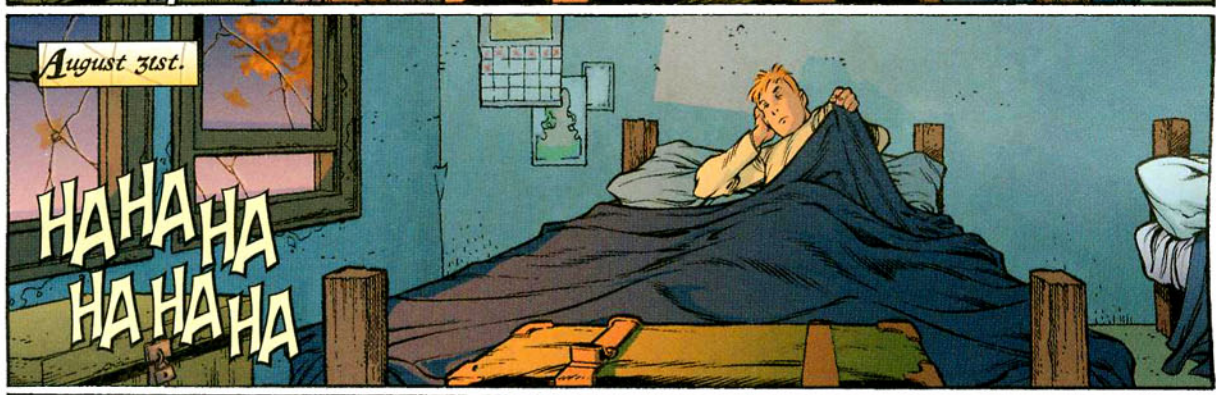
AH-AH. LEAVE IT, DAVIS. THE PRUSSIANS ARE PEELING OFF -- THE RAID IS OVER.
BUT --
HE'S OUT OF THE FIGHT, DAVIS -- ONLY ENOUGH SPELL-RESIDUE TO LET HIM FALL SAFELY.
ARROWSMITH! VERY NICE SHOOTING -- TAKING THE DRAGONET BUT NOT THE MAN!

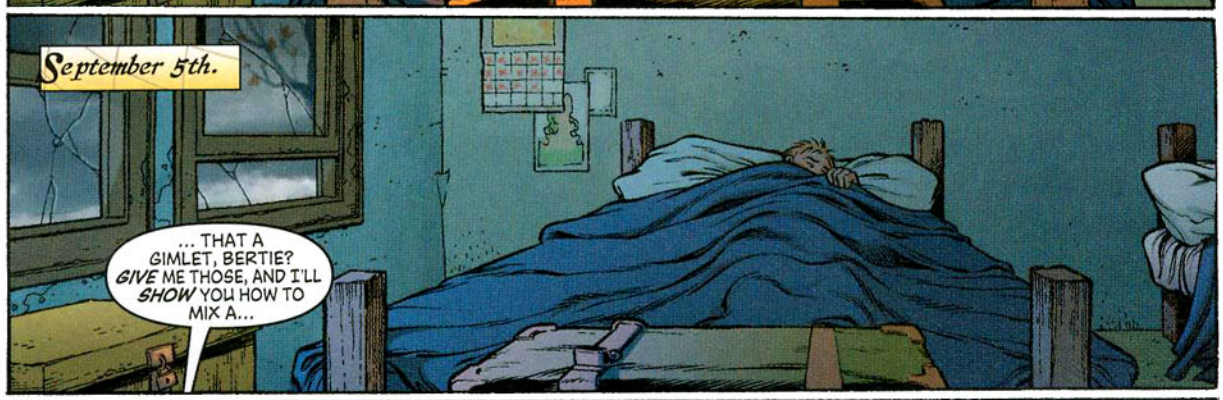
I MISSED, SIR -- I WAS AIMING FOR --
IT'S RESULTS THAT COUNT, SON. YOUR SWORD.
HIM TODAY, US TOMORROW -- THERE'S NO NEED TO BE BLOODTHIRSTY ABOUT IT. NOW COME ON, LADS -- LET'S GO HOME.

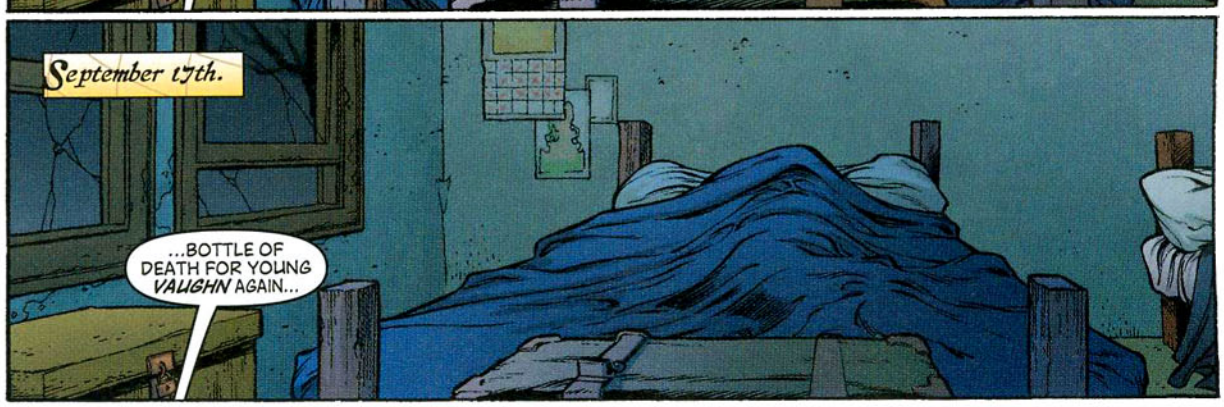

Aerodrome Cachy.
AH, PASSING THE DAY PRODUCTIVELY, I SEE...
GIVE US A KISS, GIVE US A KISS, BY SCRY-GLASS...
HO, FOXE, YOU OLD REPROBATE!
GOOD HUNTING TODAY?
BARRON!
EDWARDS! WE SAVED YOU A SEAT --
-- SAVED YOUR MONEY A SEAT, AT LEAST!
THAT WE DID, BERTRAM! WE'VE GOT THREE TONIGHT WHO'VE EARNED A DRINK FROM THE BOTTLE OF DEATH!
GOODHEART'S AN ACE TWICE OVER NOW, AND STEWART AND VAUGHN AS WELL!
ARROWSMITH -- YOU DOWNED A MAN, THOUGH YOU DIDN'T KILL HIM. JOIN US TONIGHT?
I, AH --
THANK YOU, SIR, BUT I'M TIRED. I'LL JUST GET SOME SLEEP.


August 15th.
...SO I TOLD THE GENERAL HE WAS THE SORT WHO ATE TRIPE AND GARGLED WITH HIS BEER...


August 22nd.
READ 'EM AND WEEP -- STRAIGHT FLUSH!


August 31st.
HAHA HA HA HA HA

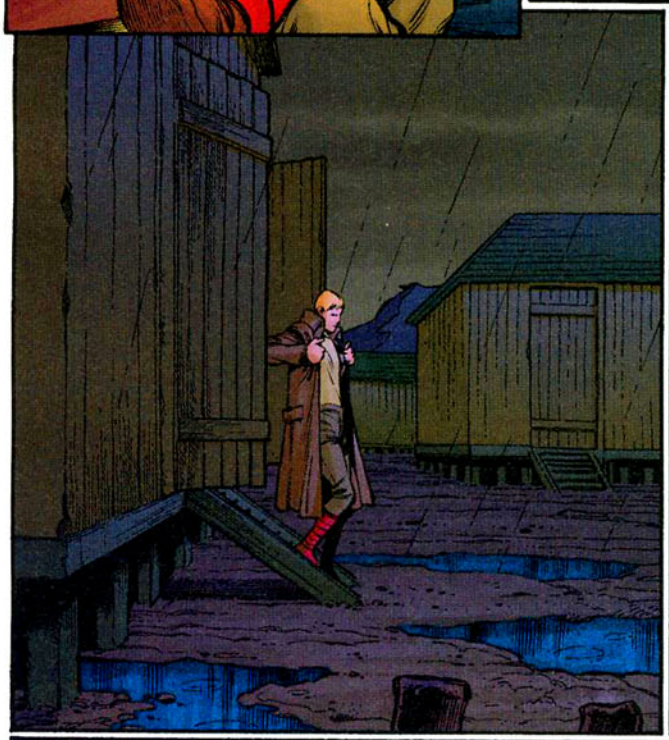

September 5th.
... THAT A GIMLET, BERTIE? GIVE ME THOSE, AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO MIX A...


September 17th.
...BOTTLE OF DEATH FOR YOUNG VAUGHN AGAIN...

September 26th.
ISN'T IT JUST A GLORIOUS DAY? ♪ OH YES, IT LOOKS LIKE RAIN! ONLY A SHOWER THAT PASSES AWAY... ...AND THEN COMES ON AGAIN!
-- AND SO I COME OUT OF THE CLOUD AND THERE HE IS, FAT AND SLOW AND STUPID --
HNH
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU COULD PLAY POKER...
Dear Gretch,
Happy Birthday. Sorry I missed it.
I guess it's hot over there, right? It usually is, this time of year. Not here.
I'm sorry I haven't written in so long, but ~~thins~~ things have been
I'm sorry it's been so long, but it's been very

NNH!
HILDA!

AT LEAST SOMEONE'S HAVING FUN.
CH!
STAY WARM. I'M JUST GOING TO STRETCH MY LEGS.



ARROWSMITH.
YOU'VE BEEN FLYING VERY WELL, SON. BETTER AND BETTER WITH EVERY MISSION. ONE OF OUR STEADIEST MEN OF LATE.
YOU'LL MAKE ACE SOON, I WARRANT.
I, AH, THANK YOU, CAPTAIN FOXE. IT'S... VERY NICE OF YOU TO SAY SO.
I WAS NERVOUS, AT FIRST, BUT I'VE BEEN TRYING --

-- AND THE ESCADRILLE'S FULL OF GOOD PILOTS. I'VE LEARNED A LOT.
YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN THAT -- FLETCHER, ISN'T IT? WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED, I DOUBTED YOU'D LAST A WEEK. BUT NOW ...

TELL ME, FLETCHER. YOU NEVER JOIN THE MEN FOR A DRINK OR A CARD GAME IN THE DAYROOM. YOU NEVER GO TO THE VILLAGE...
IS THAT... AM I DOING SOMETHING WRONG, SIR?

JUST CURIOUS.

I THINK ABOUT IT. BUT -- I CAME HERE WITH A FRIEND, A BOY I GREW UP WITH. WE JOINED UP TOGETHER.
HE'S DEAD, SIR. HE DIED THE FIRST DAY.
AND IT SEEMS -- I DON'T KNOW, WRONG SOMEHOW -- DISRESPECTFUL --

YOUR FRIEND MAY BE DEAD, FLETCHER. BUT YOU? YOU'RE ALIVE, EVEN IF IT DOESN'T MUCH FEEL LIKE IT.
IT WON'T DO HIM -- OR ANYONE -- ANY GOOD IF YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE DEAD, TOO. IT WON'T BRING ANYONE BACK, WON'T EASE YOUR PAIN...
IT'LL JUST WEAR AT YOU UNTIL YOU MAKE A MISTAKE IN FLIGHT. OR WORSE, IN COMBAT.

LISTEN TO ME, ARROWSMITH. YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU'RE ALIVE -- YOU NEED TO LET OFF STEAM, ACT FOOLISH -- IF ONLY TO REMIND YOURSELF WHICH SIDE OF THE GRAVE YOU'RE ON.
AFTER ALL, WE MAY ALL BE ON THE OTHER SOON ENOUGH.
THE RAIN SHOULD END BY AFTERNOON. SOME OF US ARE HEADED INTO THE VILLAGE. JOIN US. HAVE A DRINK, LOOK AT A GIRL. YOU'LL FEEL BETTER.

WELL.
THERE IS ONE THING I NEED TO DO...
Cachy Hospital.

THEY SAY THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A GOOD ONE.
I HOPE IT'S *ALL RIGHT*...

HEY, *FLETCHER!*
HM?

GRACE?
GRACE?!
OH, LOOK. HE *REMEMBERS* ME.

-- AND I'VE BEEN STATIONED HERE EVER SINCE!
AND THEY MAKE YOU DRESS LIKE THAT?
BELIEVE ME, WHEN I'M OUT IN THE AMBULANCE, THERE ARE DUNGAREES UNDER THIS THING.
WE SHOULD GO GET --
A DRINK? SOLD. BUT BEFORE THAT --
-- THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE I RAN INTO. I THINK YOU MIGHT KNOW HIM...
HUH?
ROCKY!
VLETCH-BOY!
ROCKY, I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AND YOUR ARM, IT'S...
IS NOTTING. GRENADE BOOM CHUNK OUT -- DE DOCS, DEY VILL IT WIT' CONGRETE, IT HEALING FINE.
SO...
"...ABOUT THAT DRINK."
ZOMBIES? FOR TRUE?
YES -- I WAS PICKING UP WOUNDED NEAR THE FRONT LINES, AND THERE WAS A BREAKTHROUGH. THE PRUSSIANS SET OFF A ZOMBIE SPELL, THE DEAD ROSE...
IF THE AMBULANCE HADN'T OVERTURNED, I'M SURE I'D BE DEAD. I WAS UNDERNEATH -- SOMETIMES I CAN STILL HEAR THEM CLAWING FOR ME.
BUT AT LEAST THAT ENDED. THE WORST PART IS GETTING NO SLEEP. AND I'VE ONLY BEEN HERE TWO MONTHS! I DON'T KNOW HOW PEOPLE STAND IT!
ALL I THINK ABOUT, SOMETIMES, IS HOME. MY OWN BED...
ROCKY, GRACE -- I'M SO SORRY. YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE, EITHER OF YOU. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE SUGGESTED --
ESPECIALLY TO YOU, ROCKY, THOSE THINGS I SAID...

NA, NA. YOU WAS RIGHT, VLETCH. DAT WHY I JOIN UP.
DESE PEOPLE, DIS WAR -- DEY GOT TO BE STOPPED. T'INGS IS GETTING VER' BAD.
MY PEOPLE, DEY SAYING -- DE OLD GODS, DE GODS OF DE NORT -- DEY UPSET 'BOUT DIS WAR. IT HURT DE LAND. HURT DEM.
IT GOT TO BE ENDED -- BEFORE TOO MUCH HURTING DONE TO FIX.
THE GODS...OF THE NORTH?
HOW DOES IT...?

SAY, ARROWSMITH! GOOD TO SEE YOU OUT AND ABOUT, SON!
CAPTAIN FOXE!
GRACE, ROCKY, THIS IS --

NO, NO -- DON'T GET UP. YOU'RE NOT ON DUTY, AND WHO AM I TO INTERRUPT A PLEASANT AFTERNOON WITH FRIENDS?
DON'T BELIEVE HIS LIES, YOU TWO. HE'S ONLY SAVED THE WHOLE SQUADRON THREE TIMES, NOT TEN --

-- AND HE'D ONLY HAVE SEVEN POUR LE MERITE MEDALS IF HIS COMMANDING OFFICER WASN'T HALF BLIND.
HOPE TO SEE YOU LATER THIS EVENING, FLETCHER. BRING YOUR FRIENDS.

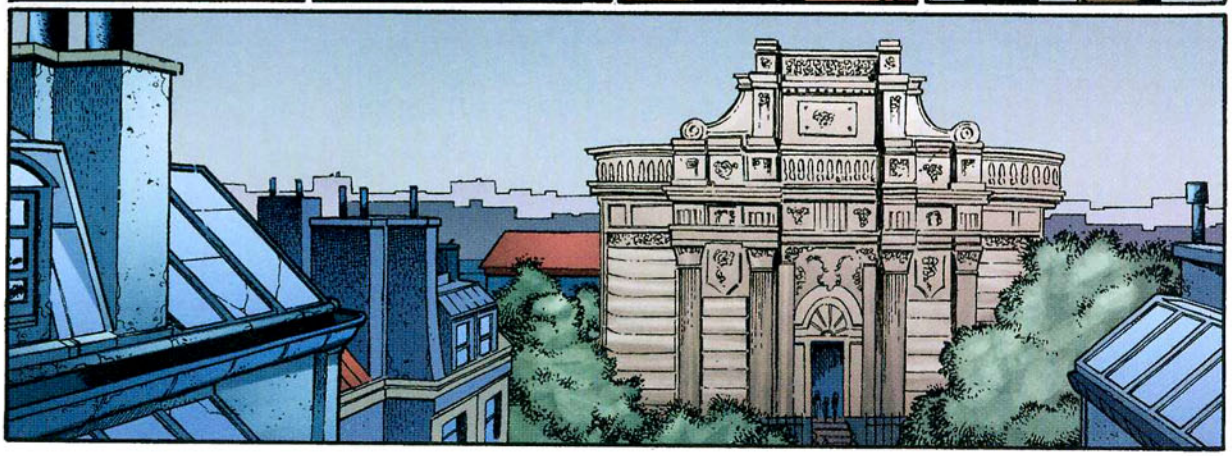
WELL.
HE'S...QUITE SOMETHING, ISN'T HE?

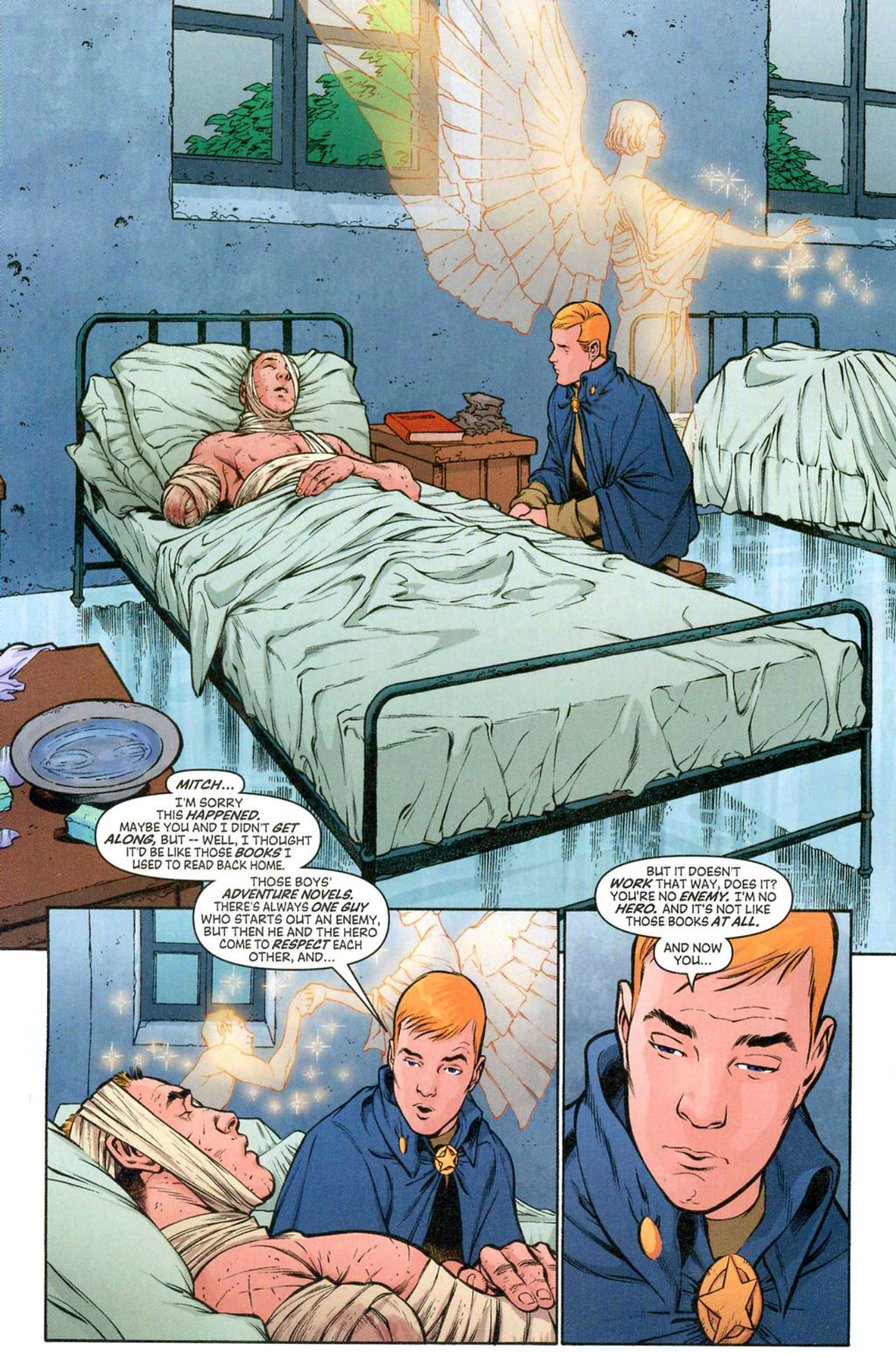
I CAN'T DISAGREE, GRACE. WHEN I WANTED TO JOIN UP, THAT'S WHAT I DREAMED OF BEING -- JUST LIKE HIM.
HE'S THE BEST WE HAVE.
EVEN NOW, MOSTLY WHAT I DO IS WATCH HIM IN THE AIR, TRY TO DO WHAT HE DOES.

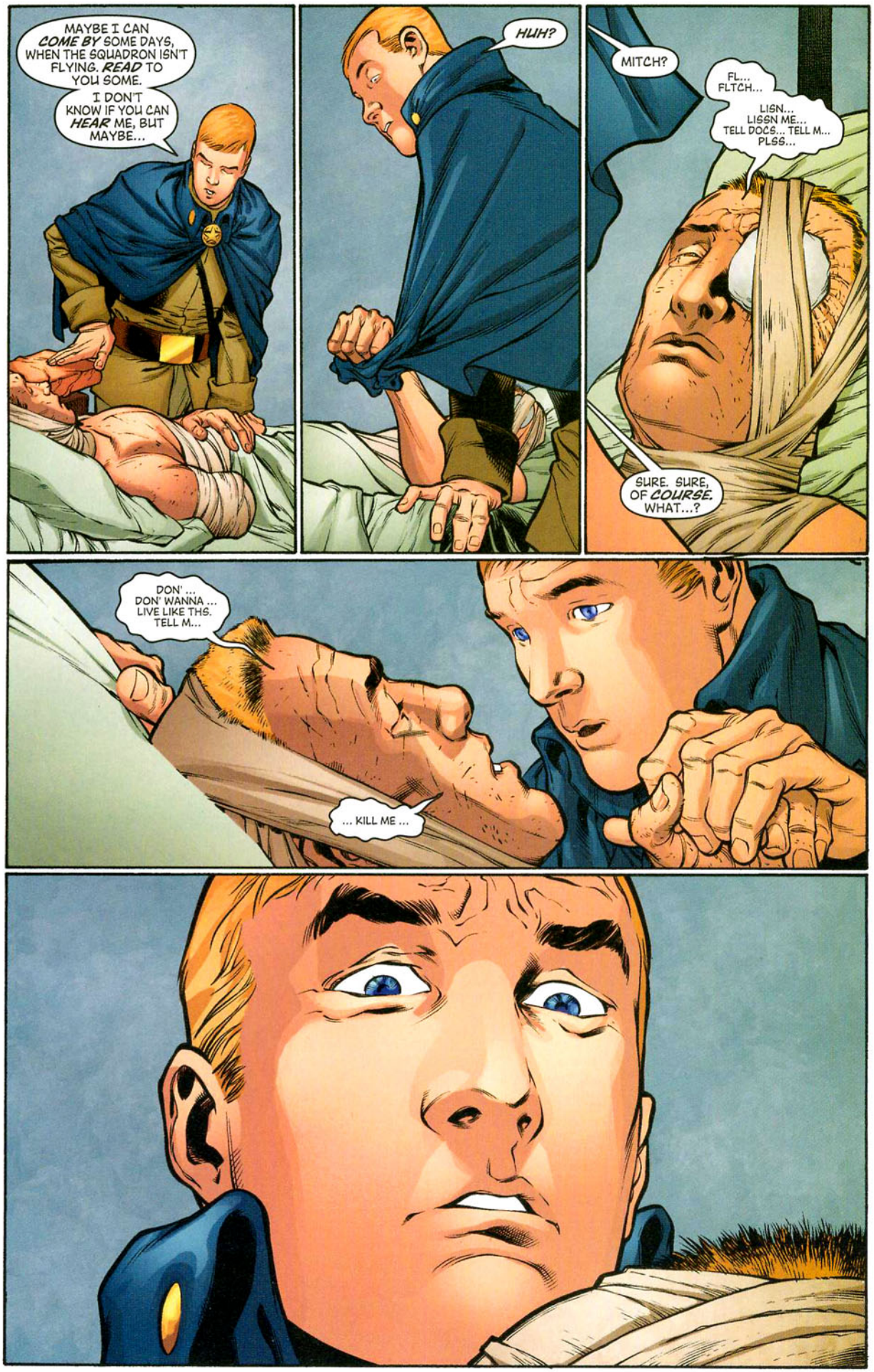
HEH.
HE'S BEEN TELLING ME I NEED TO LIGHTEN UP. NOT BE SO SERIOUS ALL THE TIME...
WELL, MAYBE HE'S RIGHT.

AND IF YOU'RE IMITATING HIM IN THE AIR, AND IT'S WORKING OUT...
...IT MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A BAD IDEA TO IMITATE HIM ON THE GROUND, AS WELL.

TRUE, TRUE.
LOOK, IT'S BEEN GREAT SEEING YOU BOTH -- REALLY GREAT -- AND WE SHOULD MEET UP AGAIN FOR DINNER LATER --
-- BUT RIGHT NOW --
-- I HAVE SOMETHING I NEED TO DO.

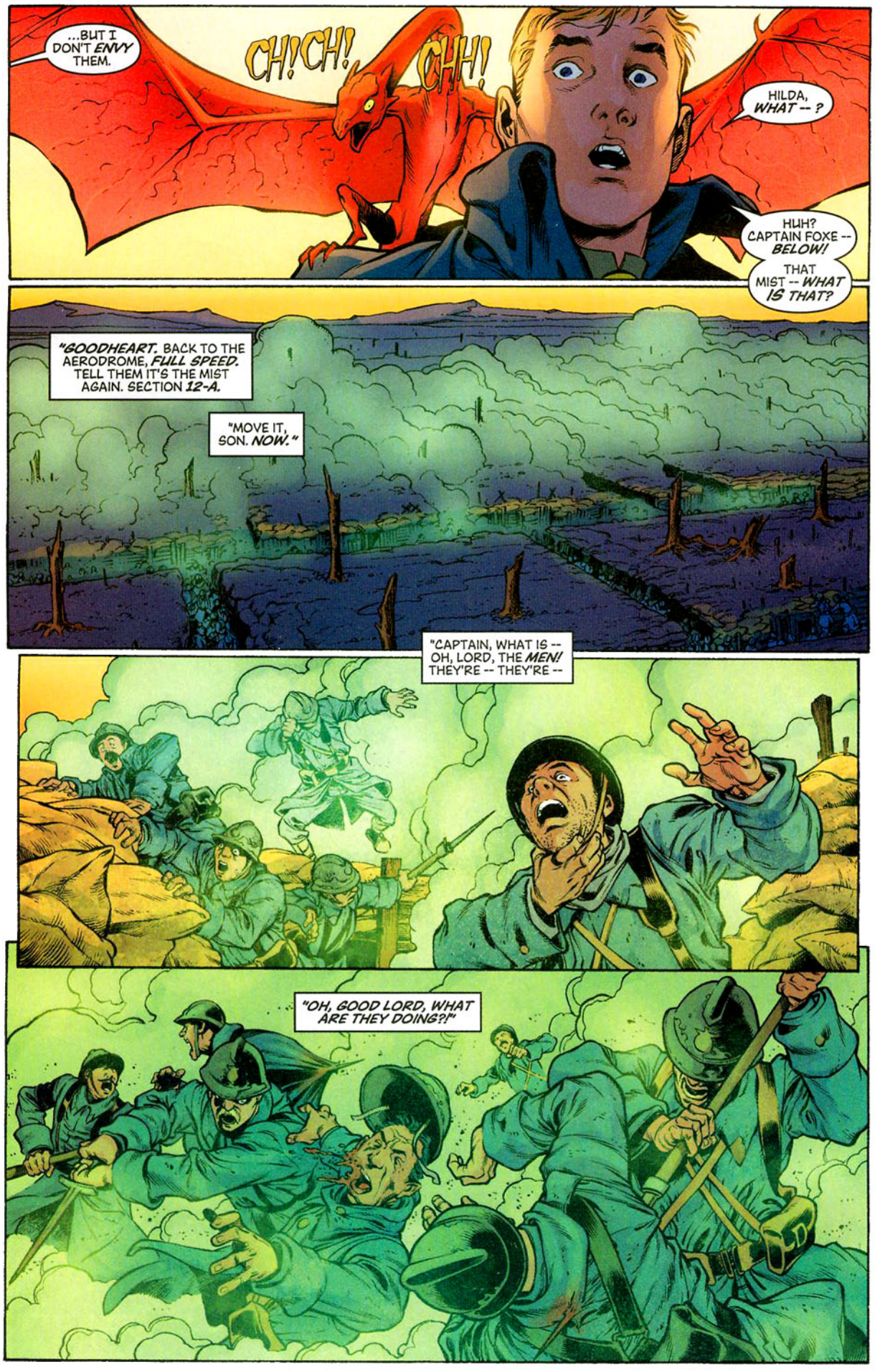


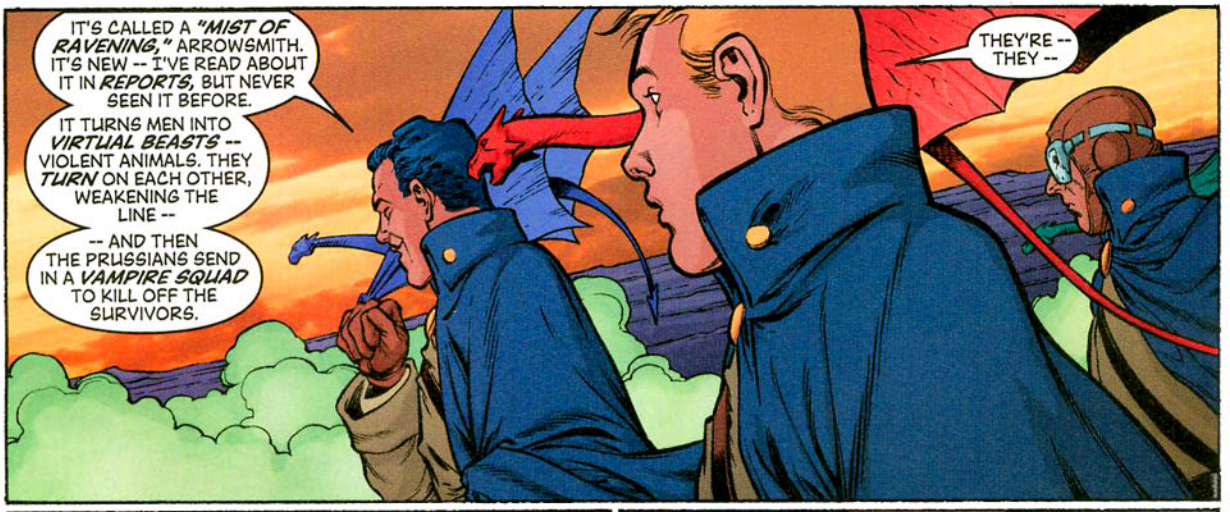

MITCH...
I'M SORRY THIS HAPPENED. MAYBE YOU AND I DIDN'T GET ALONG, BUT -- WELL, I THOUGHT IT'D BE LIKE THOSE BOOKS I USED TO READ BACK HOME.
THOSE BOYS' ADVENTURE NOVELS. THERE'S ALWAYS ONE GUY WHO STARTS OUT AN ENEMY, BUT THEN HE AND THE HERO COME TO RESPECT EACH OTHER, AND...
BUT IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY, DOES IT? YOU'RE NO ENEMY. I'M NO HERO. AND IT'S NOT LIKE THOSE BOOKS AT ALL.
AND NOW YOU...


MAYBE I CAN COME BY SOME DAYS, WHEN THE SQUADRON ISN'T FLYING. READ TO YOU SOME.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, BUT MAYBE...
HUH?
MITCH?
FL... FLTCH...
LISN... LISSN ME... TELL DOCS... TELL M... PLSS...
SURE. SURE, OF COURSE. WHAT...?
DON' ... DON' WANNA ... LIVE LIKE THS. TELL M...
... KILL ME ...

AND HEY PRESTO -- THAT'S ONE LESS SUPPLY LINE THE CENTRAL POWERS CAN USE.
NOW LET'S GET BACK TO THE OTHERS -- THEY'VE HELD THE PRUSSIANS OFF LONG ENOUGH, HM? NICE BOMBARDMENT, BY THE WAY. KEEP IMPROVING LIKE THIS, YOU'LL HAVE MY JOB.
THANK YOU, SIR... ...BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET USED TO ALL THIS.
GOOD.
LET'S HOPE NONE OF US DO.

LOOK. THE *FORWARD TRENCHES.*
LOOKS LIKE THEY JUST HAD A *BATTLE.* THEY'RE STILL RECOVERING...
I DON'T *ENVY* THEM.
THEY HAVE TO *FIGHT* FOR THE GROUND WE FLY OVER. EVERY FOOT, EVERY *INCH* OF IT PAID FOR WITH BLOOD.
I *ADMIRE* THEM FOR IT, RESPECT THEM BEYOND *MEASURE*...


...BUT I DON'T *ENVY* THEM.
CH!CH!
CHH!
HILDA, *WHAT* -- ?
HUH? CAPTAIN FOXE -- *BELOW!*
THAT MIST -- *WHAT IS THAT?*
"*GOODHEART.* BACK TO THE AERODROME, *FULL SPEED.* TELL THEM IT'S THE MIST AGAIN. SECTION *12-A.*
"MOVE IT, SON. *NOW.*"
"CAPTAIN, WHAT IS -- OH, LORD, THE *MEN!* THEY'RE -- THEY'RE --
"*OH, GOOD LORD, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?!*"


IT'S CALLED A "MIST OF RAVENING," ARROWSMITH. IT'S NEW -- I'VE READ ABOUT IT IN REPORTS, BUT NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
IT TURNS MEN INTO VIRTUAL BEASTS -- VIOLENT ANIMALS. THEY TURN ON EACH OTHER, WEAKENING THE LINE --
-- AND THEN THE PRUSSIANS SEND IN A VAMPIRE SQUAD TO KILL OFF THE SURVIVORS.
THEY'RE -- THEY --

WE'VE GOT TO GET DOWN THERE -- GET THEM OUT OF THAT!
QUICKLY! WE CAN --

NO, SON -- WE CAN'T. WE HAVE NO DEFENSE AGAINST THE MIST -- OUR WIZARDS ARE WORKING ON IT, BUT NOTHING YET. IT'D JUST TURN US, TOO.
ALL WE CAN DO IS REPORT IT -- CALL IN MAGES TO DISPERSE THE MIST, DRIVE OFF THE VAMPIRES.

BUT IT -- HOW CAN THEY DO THIS?!
IT'S HELLISH! INHUMAN!

YES. YES, IT IS.
AND THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM, FLETCHER.
THEY'LL UNLEASH ANY INSANE, VICIOUS, MONSTROUS SPELL OR POTION THEY CAN CREATE, AND THAT'S WHY THEY HAVE TO BE STOPPED.

BUT US -- EVEN IF OUR WIZARDS HAD THE SORT OF MINDS THAT COULD EVEN THINK OF SUCH THINGS --

"-- WE WOULD NEVER, NEVER USE THEM."
SO. IT WORKS, THEN? IT'S BEEN FULLY TESTED?
THIS WAS THE FOURTH TEST UNDER CONTROLLED CONDITIONS. THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT.
=SIGH= VERY WELL, THEN...
...BEGIN PREPARATIONS FOR COMBAT USE.
Next: INFERNAL DEVICES

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Carl Hirsch
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Arrowsmith has made me more excited about comics than I can remember within the past 10 years or so. Thank you so much. Here's hoping for a long, long run.

In the meantime, I'll be spreading the word, urging people to pick up this book.

Thanks!

Daryl Lanz
daryl@chartermi.net

I picked up *Arrowsmith* #1 on something of a whim. Despite (or maybe because of) the fact that I read 60-plus comics a month, I'm a bit reluctant to pick up some new titles. But it is hard to pass up a book with the names Busiek and Pacheco on it. I thoroughly enjoyed #1 and immediately added it to my pull list.

But this letter is supposed to be about #2. I'm a real sucker for alternate history/world type stories, and the inclusion of magic and creatures such as trolls, dwarfs, etc. really clinched the deal. I love the subtle touches of things that are just a bit different from our world (like the Statue of Liberty—or does it have a different name here?) and the fact that some things don't change—i.e., the bigotry towards other races shown by Binnie Atherton. On a side note, what's the origin of the word "hunkies" that she uses? I encountered that word this summer in the novels of James T. Farrell.

I'm very interested to see where this is going (well, Europe, but other than that...). I also like the class difference between Fletcher (Fletcher Arrowsmith; what a great and perfectly redundant name) and Grace. His small town upbringing shows through in this issue.

I really like the maps that show up in the back of the book, as well. I always thought that fantasy books with maps in the front were the best ones. I'll even forgive you for placing me somewhere in the northern reaches of Tejas, so close to the border with North Virginia.

Pacheco's art, as always, is stunning. I was mesmerized by the two-page spread that opened this issue.

I really look forward to the rest of the series. I hope it does well for you. Any chance we'll see further stories set in this same world?

The plan is definitely to do more mini-series following Fletcher's adventures and exploring more of his world, Daryl—and the support we've gotten for *Arrowsmith* so far puts those plans very much on track.

According to wordorigins.com, the word "hunky" dates to 1909, and is probably derived from "Hungarian"—the term is usually used to refer to people of Slavic ancestry, though Binnie uses it a bit more broadly.

And hey, nothing wrong with living in North Tejas—just think what I have to deal with, telling my friends and neighbors they're now Californians!

Matt Fields
459 Westminster Ave
SLC, UT 84115

I was pleased to see your map of North America in *Arrowsmith* #2. I would love to see a story that explores the State of Deseret in this magical world. I'm a great fan of alterni-historians who recognize that it was only the might of a federated United States that encouraged Brigham Young to join the Union rather than fighting to make his own country.

The story I would be most interested in does not seem appropriate for *Arrowsmith*. It is a lesser-known fact that the original plans for Deseret included a seaport—San Diego in our world. Brig sent colonists there specifically to establish a Mormon port. I would love to see how California and Deseret resolved disputes over this land.

We've received a lot of comments on the maps, curious about one or another aspect of *Arrowsmith's* history or geography, and all we can say is—give us enough time, and enough mini-series, and we'll get to 'em all!

And I'll admit, the idea of a Mormon seaport in heavily-Spanish California has a lot of possibilities. Who says they ever did resolve it?

Tue Sorensen
sorensonian@get2net.dk

I thought *Arrowsmith* #1 was so-so, but #2 stood out to me as a much stronger story. First and foremost, there seemed to be more story in #2. I was more interested in the characters, and I thought the events gave Carlos a lot of great opportunities to show just how fantastic an artist he is. He does facial expressions as well as, or better than, any artist I've ever seen. The aerial scenes also were spectacular.

Seeing *Arrowsmith's* magical world in more detail was exciting and gratifying. My sole complaint is that the colors are too rich. I think this title needs a more realistic, down-to-earth (well, not literally) look.

But I enjoyed this issue a lot, and really look forward to the next. You've got a good thing going here—another one!

Actually, we think Alex Sinclair's coloring is more down-to-Earth than most (and influenced, as well, by early 20th-century magazine illustration) and perfect for the book. But we're delighted to hear you like more of the book than you don't—and I hope #3 continued our climb upward in your estimation.

Next issue, Fletcher goes on a key mission—a mission that'll change everything, both for him and, in many ways, the war. Don't miss it—we'd miss you.

—Kurt Busiek

MASKS: TOO HOT FOR TV! ON SALE 12/31

Mainstream comics these days seem so darn serious. That was what was on my mind when I was having an enormous plate of nachos with Scott Dunbier one day last spring. "Let's do a superhero parody of COPS," I said. "An anthology one-shot, with funny writers and cool artists, and just laugh at the genre using the framework of COPS or GIRLS GONE WILD, stuff like that. Sort of like that TROOPS thing, but with superheroes instead of Storm-troopers. Something just to have some fun with."

He thought about it for a second and then said, "That sounds cool." And I mostly forgot about it after that.

But two months later, Ben Abernathy is on the phone giving me the artist line-up: Richard Corben, Doug Mahnke, Whilce Portacio, Amanda Conner—all favorites of mine, plus a guy named Tony Akins whose art blew us both away. Then we've got the writers: Patton Oswalt, who I think is one of the funniest men alive, Judd Winick and Marc Andreyko, both of whom crack me up regularly, and Jill Thompson whose script made me laugh so hard I could barely write my own afterward.

Now the final product is done and I have to say, everyone got very into just having some fun and turned in really great work. So if you're looking to laugh at the superhero genre this December, I can't imagine there's a better book for you than MASKS: TOO HOT FOR TV!

–Ed Brubaker

Need more Brubaker in the month of December? The critically acclaimed SLEEPER, with art by the incredible Sean Phillips, ends its first season with a BANG. Check out the project that made Wizard Magazine exclaim, "Wake up and smell the goodness, people!" For new fans of the book, the first trade paperback SLEEPER: OUT IN THE COLD debuts December 17th and collects issues 1-6. Whatta deal!

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Arrowsmith #5

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• CONTINUING THE SAGA OF •

Arrowsmith

• CHAPTER FIVE •
ATROCITY!

It is 1915. The Great War rages — a war that strains Europe's military and sorcerous might — and countless young men have been hurled into battle to be tempered by its fires or to perish in them. One such is Fletcher Arrowsmith, a volunteer from the United States of Columbia, who has been trained as an airman, a flying wizard, and sent to the front to fight.

Fletcher has seen much, losing friends and growing numb to battle, and has begun to emerge as a seasoned airman. But he remains aghast at the infernal weapons of the enemy, such as the mist of ravening, an eldritch gas that turns men into howling beasts.

Of late, Fletcher has reunited with good friends — Grace Hilliard, volunteer ambulance driver and daughter of an industrial-magic magnate, and Rocky, a rock-troll who worked for Fletcher's father. Both have endured horrors as well, and Rocky has become convinced that the old gods of his region are angry with mankind, and the war must end before something unimaginable happens.

And now, Fletcher's squadron has been chosen to use a new, experimental weapon...

BY KURT BUSIEK & CARLOS PACHECO
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RICH! & COMICRAFT'S ROB STEEN, LETTERING
KRISTY QUINN, ASS'T EDITOR • SCOTT DUNBIER, EDITOR
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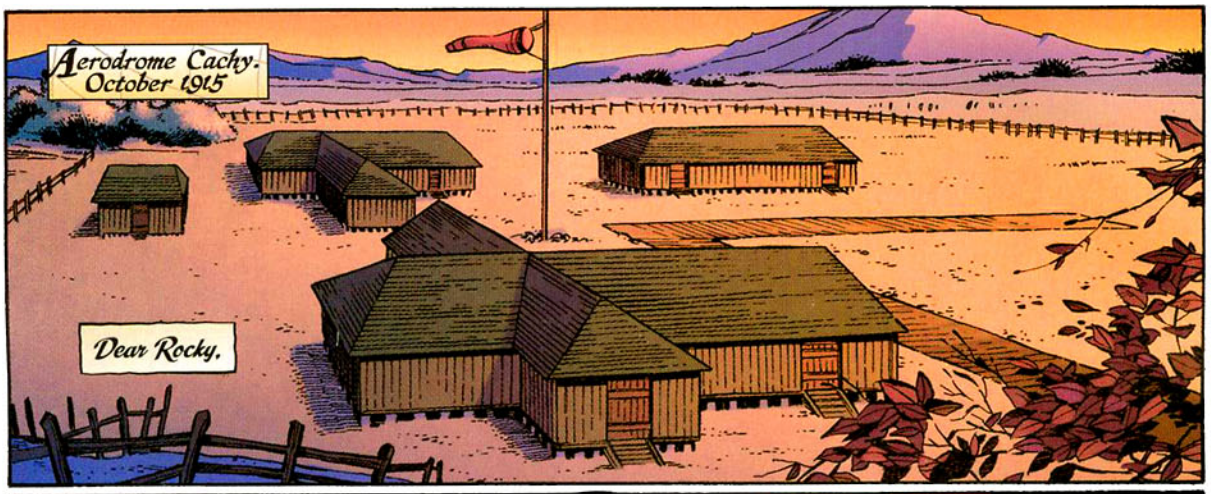
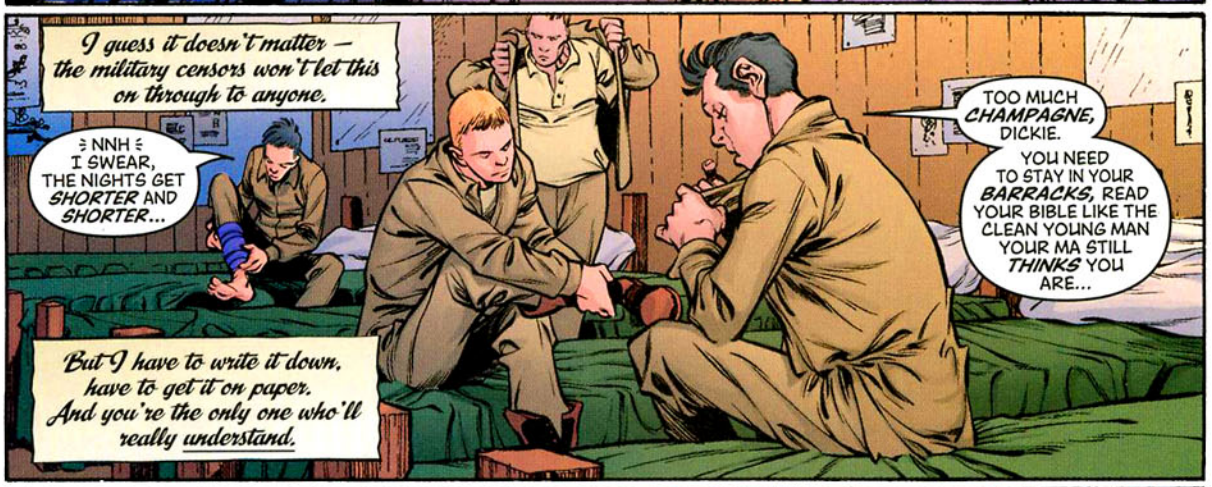
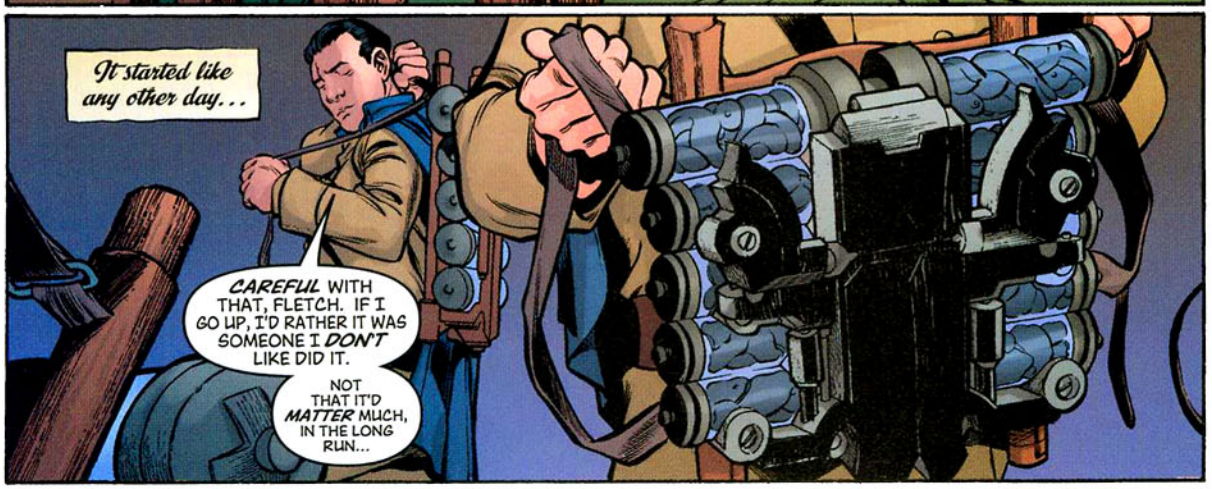
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE ADVENTURER & HERO


Aerodrome Cachy. October 1915
Dear Rocky,

I don't know where you are these days, whether you're back with your unit, whether you're even alive.
HO, LADS!
ROLL OUT, ALL! TIME TO EARN OUR PAY AGAIN!


I guess it doesn't matter — the military censors won't let this on through to anyone.
NNH I SWEAR, THE NIGHTS GET SHORTER AND SHORTER...
TOO MUCH CHAMPAGNE, DICKIE.
YOU NEED TO STAY IN YOUR BARRACKS, READ YOUR BIBLE LIKE THE CLEAN YOUNG MAN YOUR MA STILL THINKS YOU ARE...
But I have to write it down, have to get it on paper. And you're the only one who'll really understand.

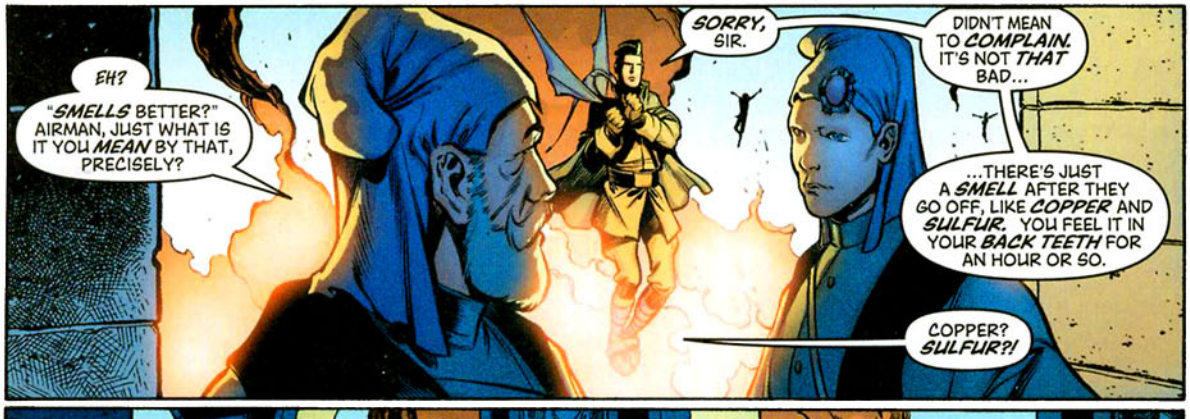

It started like any other day...
CAREFUL WITH THAT, FLETCH. IF I GO UP, I'D RATHER IT WAS SOMEONE I DON'T LIKE DID IT.
NOT THAT IT'D MATTER MUCH, IN THE LONG RUN...

It wasn't, though. It wasn't.
IS THIS IT, CAPTAIN FOXE? THE BIG ONE?
IT'S JUST A JOB, LAD.
THEY'RE ALL JUST JOBS. WE DO WHAT WE'RE TOLD, WE COME HOME, WE GO INTO THE VILLAGE FOR DRINKS.
THERE'S A NEW SHIPMENT OF NURSES DUE AT THE HOSPITAL TODAY -- SO MAYBE EVEN YOU CAN GET A DATE TONIGHT, PHILIP!
GATHER CLOSE, ALL, AND SHIELD YOUR EYES. I'M TRIGGERING THE CLOAKING SPELL.
THE DAZZLE WON'T LAST --
-- BUT THE ENEMY WON'T SEE US, NOT FOR AN HOUR OR TWO...
It was supposed to be just another job, like Foxe said.
But I kept thinking about the other night.

THAT'S IT, GRACE, *THE ACADÉMIE MILITAIRE -- L'ÉCOLE DE SORCELLERIE EXPÉRIMENTALE.*
MY HOME AWAY FROM *HOME*, THESE LAST FEW DAYS.
I had a pass, so Grace and I had an evening out, in Paris.
She looked tired. They'd been working the ambulance corps awfully hard, but it wasn't just that. It was something in her eyes — the things she'd seen.
I wish I could have shown her Paris the way it was supposed to be. I wish I knew what Paris was supposed to be...

WE'VE BEEN TRAINING THERE FOR A MISSION. THEY WON'T TELL US MUCH ABOUT IT...
WELL.
AT LEAST YOU'RE WORKING WITH THE SENIOR WIZARDRY CORPS, RIGHT?
THEY'RE THE BEST ALBION AND GALLIA HAVE TO OFFER. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING.
DO THEY?
I SUPPOSE THIS IS ALL TOP SECRET, AND I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING, BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED THIS MORNING.
WE WERE TESTING THE LAUNCHERS...
WATCH YOUR TRIGGER-WORDS, BOYS!
THESE ARE ONLY PARAFFIN TEST-CHARGES, BUT THEY'RE STILL LIVE!
AAAAAND...
LAUNCH!
PAFF
PAFF
PAFF
PAFF

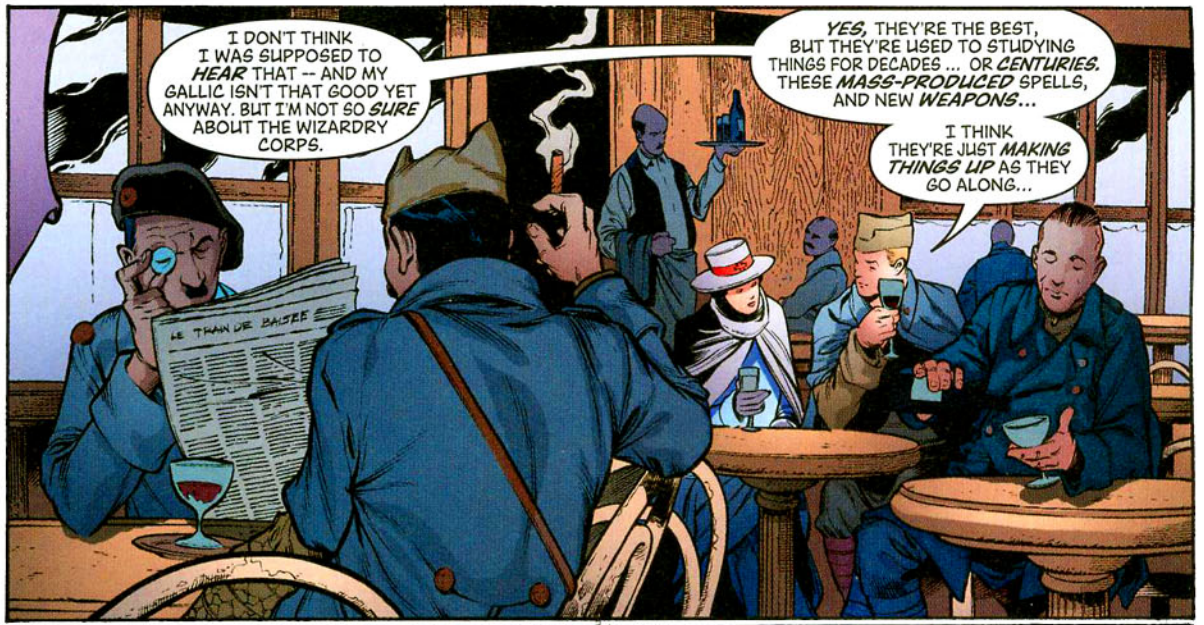
HMP.
VERY GOOD. VERY SMOOTH RELEASE. NO JAMS, NOTHING OFF-TARGET.
YES...
AT LEAST THAT DAMNED CONTRAPTION FINALLY WORKS!
WHATEVER THEY LOAD IT WITH, I JUST HOPE IT SMELLS BETTER THAN THAT STINKROT THEY SAY KEEP OGRES AWAY FROM THE TRENCHES...


EH?
"SMELLS BETTER?" AIRMAN, JUST WHAT IS IT YOU MEAN BY THAT, PRECISELY?
SORRY, SIR.
DIDN'T MEAN TO COMPLAIN. IT'S NOT THAT BAD...
...THERE'S JUST A SMELL AFTER THEY GO OFF, LIKE COPPER AND SULFUR. YOU FEEL IT IN YOUR BACK TEETH FOR AN HOUR OR SO.
COPPER? SULFUR?!

THANK YOU, AIRMAN. THAT WILL BE ALL.
ORDERLY!
YES, MAGISTER BOISROND?

I WANT FIGURES ON THE SPELL-STRENGTH OF THE ANTI-OGRE THAUMATICS, IMMEDIATELY. THEY'RE OUT OF BALANCE.
AND CALL IN DEMONOLOGY, HAVE THEM DO POSSESSION CHECKS ON EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN EXPOSED.
YES, MAGISTER.

POSSESSION CHECKS...?


I DON'T THINK I WAS SUPPOSED TO HEAR THAT -- AND MY GALLIC ISN'T THAT GOOD YET ANYWAY. BUT I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THE WIZARDRY CORPS.
YES, THEY'RE THE BEST, BUT THEY'RE USED TO STUDYING THINGS FOR DECADES ... OR CENTURIES. THESE MASS-PRODUCED SPELLS, AND NEW WEAPONS...
I THINK THEY'RE JUST MAKING THINGS UP AS THEY GO ALONG...

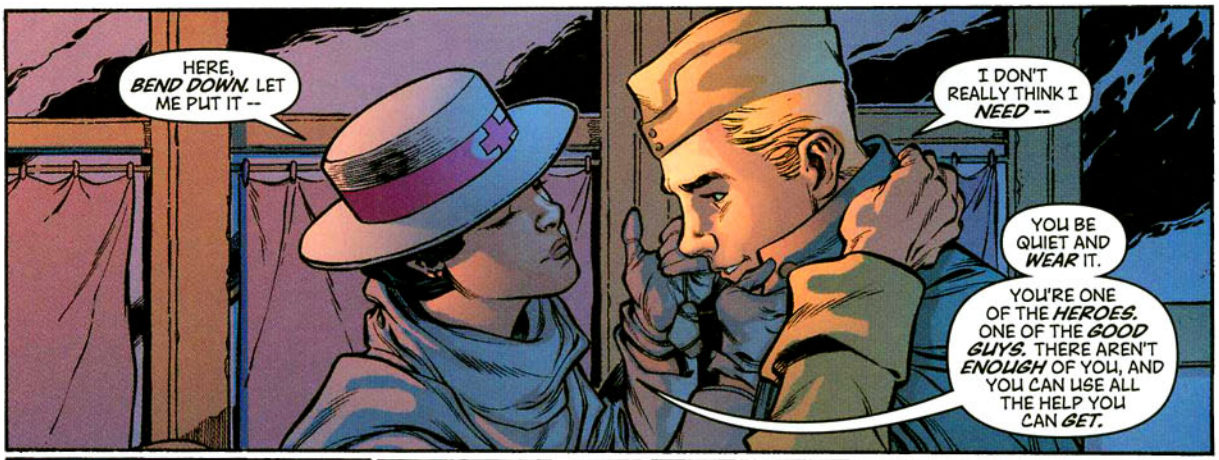
THEY'RE JUST DOING WHAT THEY HAVE TO TO WIN THIS AWFUL WAR. AND IT'S GOT TO BE WON, FLETCHER.
THE PRUSSIANS, THE TYROLIANS, THEY'RE MONSTERS. MONSTERS!
WHAT THEY DO...

SOME OF THE WOUNDED I'VE PICKED UP -- HIT BY INFERNAL SPELLS, TORN APART BY FOUL CREATURES ...
JUST LAST WEEK, WE TRIED TO RETRIEVE A SQUAD THAT HAD BEEN ATTACKED.
THEY WERE YOUNGER THAN WE ARE, AND THEY WERE IN SUCH PAIN. AND WHEN WE TRIED TO LOAD THEM INTO THE AMBULANCES, THEY JUST...
...THEY FELL APART...
GRACE...

I KNOW IT'S BAD, GRACE. BUT YOU'RE A VOLUNTEER, YOU CAN GO HOME...
THAT WON'T STOP IT, WILL IT? THAT'LL JUST MEAN SOMEONE ELSE HAS TO DEAL WITH IT. NO, I'LL STAY. DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP US WIN.
OH, FLETCH -- I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.

ROCKY HAD TO GO, TO REJOIN HIS UNIT...
...BUT HE LEFT THIS FOR YOU.

HE KEPT SAYING THE GODS ARE TROUBLED, UNHAPPY...
...AND HE WANTED YOU TO BE PROTECTED.


HERE, BEND DOWN. LET ME PUT IT --
I DON'T REALLY THINK I NEED --
YOU BE QUIET AND WEAR IT.
YOU'RE ONE OF THE HEROES. ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS. THERE AREN'T ENOUGH OF YOU, AND YOU CAN USE ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET.

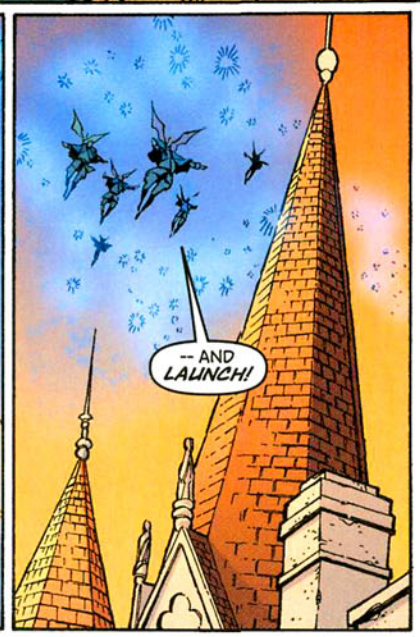
So I wore the amulet. Sometimes it's warm, sometimes it's cold. I don't know if that's magic or just because it's stone.
But it might have —

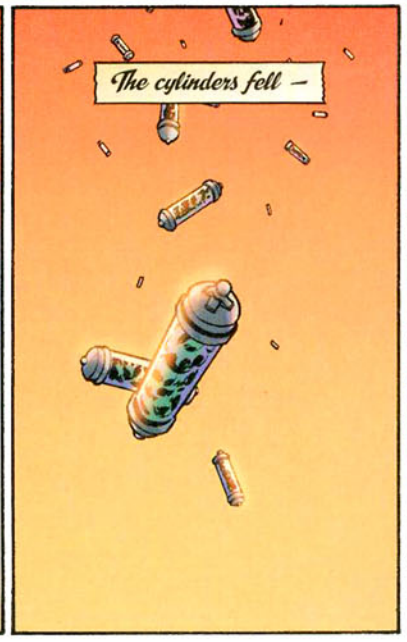
No. I'm getting ahead of myself. We flew into northwest Prussia, into Lower Saxony, staying low...

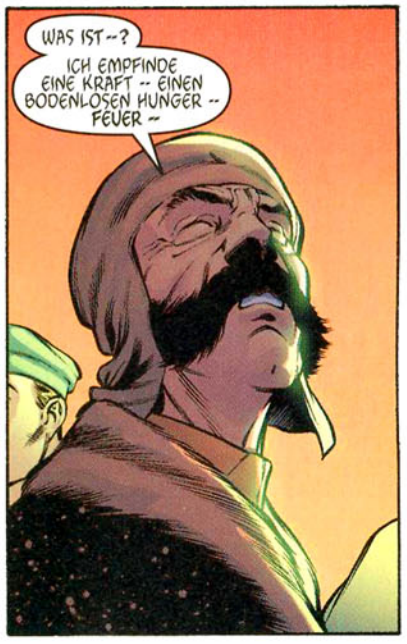
SO WHAT ARE THESE THINGS, ANYWAY? SOME SORT OF BOMBS?
THE WAY THEY'RE MOVING AROUND IN THE JARS, I'D SWEAR THEY'RE ALMOST --

BE QUIET, LOGAN. THE CLOAKING SPELL KEEPS US FROM BEING SEEN, UNDER MOST CIRCUMSTANCES -- BUT WE CAN BE HEARD.
BESIDES --

"-- OUR TARGET'S IN *SIGHT.*"







-- and when they hit --
KSSH
KSSH
AAAH!
AAAAAAAH!
AAAH!
OH MY GOD --

The jars — they were salamanders — fire elementals —
MY LORD --
NO TIME FOR SIGHTSEEING, LADS! SWING AROUND AGAIN --
-- MAKE ANOTHER PASS!

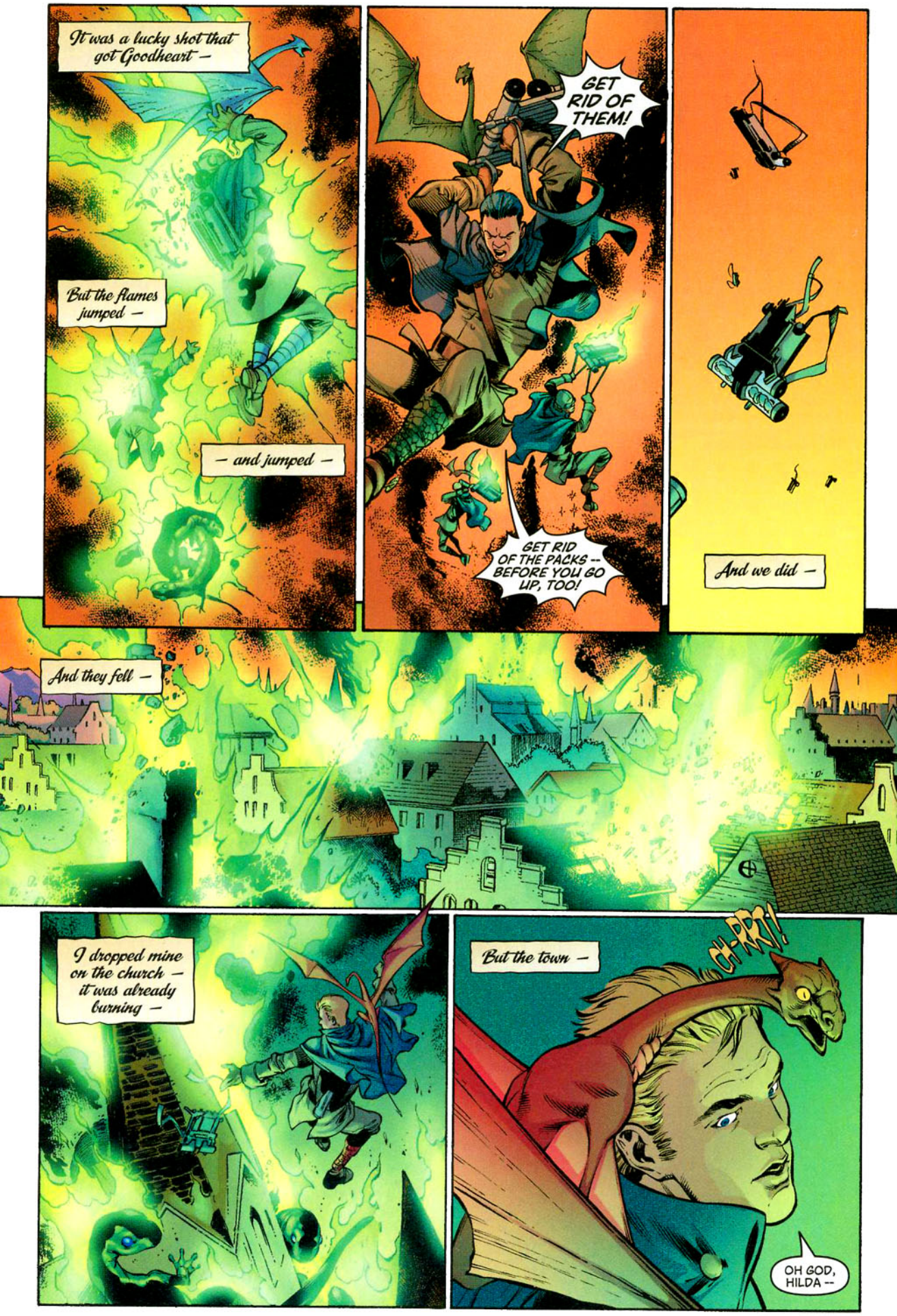
DIE KIRCHE -- DAS LABORATORIUM--
WAS --
ICH HÖRE ETWAS! UND ES RIESELT -- IM RAUCH --

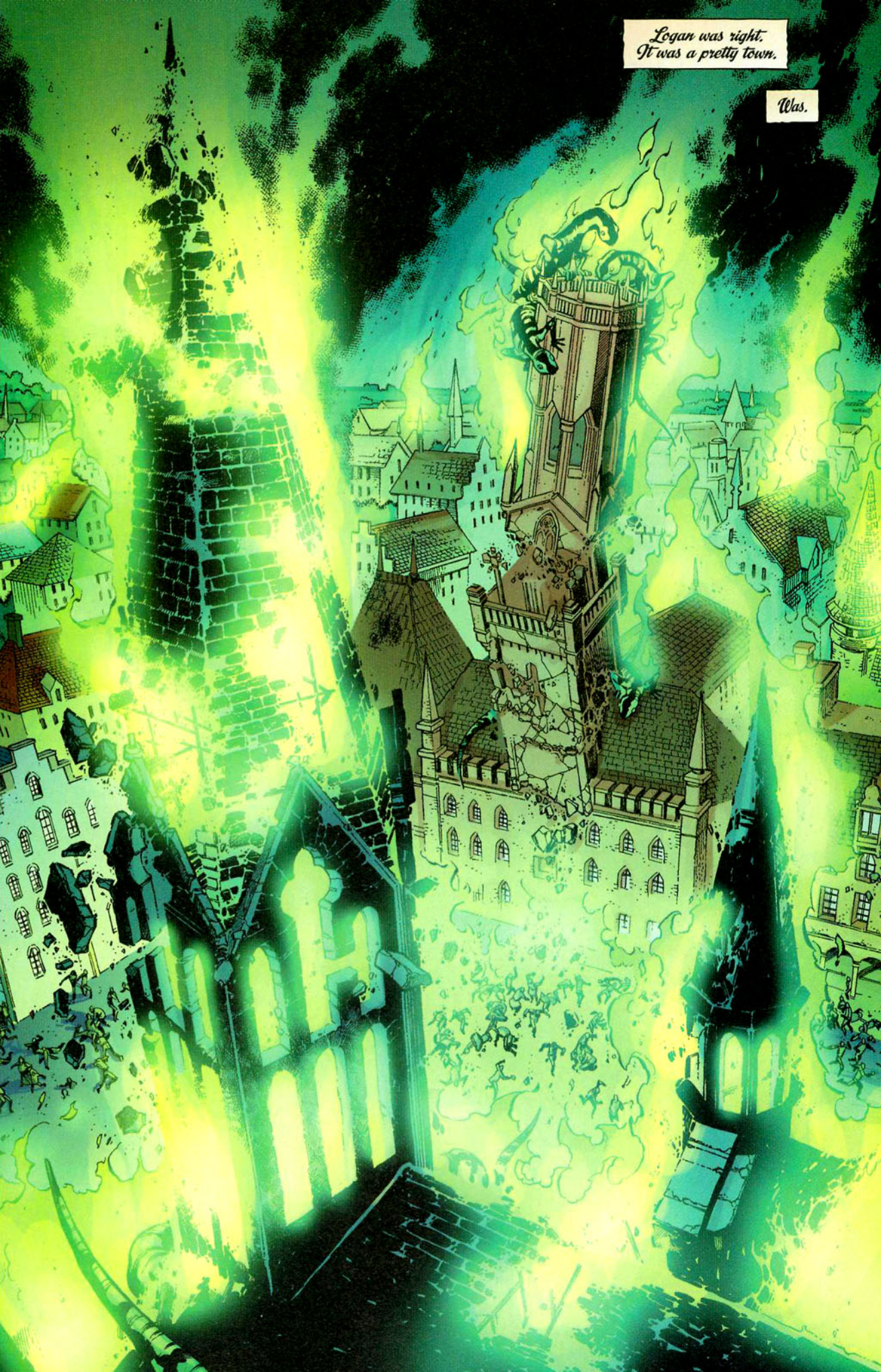
DIE GALLIENEN -- ES MUSS DIE GALLIENEN SEIN! ZUM TEUFEL MIT IHNEN -- UND IHRE GEMEINE, TEUFELVEREHRENDE KETZEREI!
LOSSCHIESSEN! LOSSCHIESSEN!

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

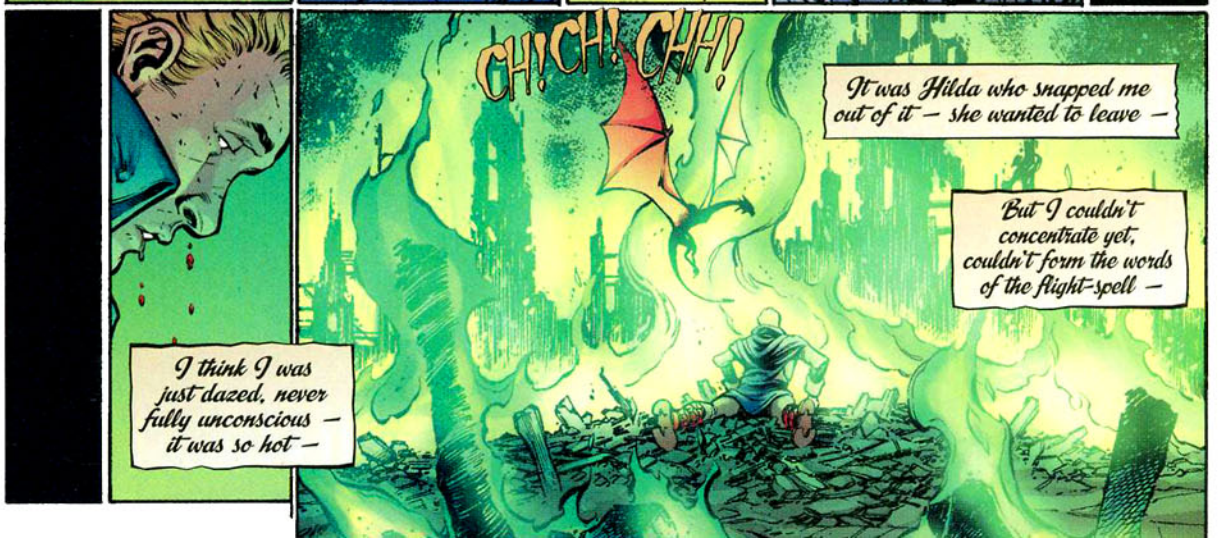
HA!
THEY'RE FIRING BLIND! THEY CAN'T SEE US WORTH A --
NO.
KRAK

Aaaaaaaa


It was a lucky shot that got Goodheart —
But the flames jumped —
— and jumped —
GET RID OF THEM!
GET RID OF THE PACKS -- BEFORE YOU GO UP, TOO!
And we did —
And they fell —
I dropped mine on the church — it was already burning —
But the town —
CH-RRT!
OH GOD, HILDA --


Logan was right.
It was a pretty town.
Was.

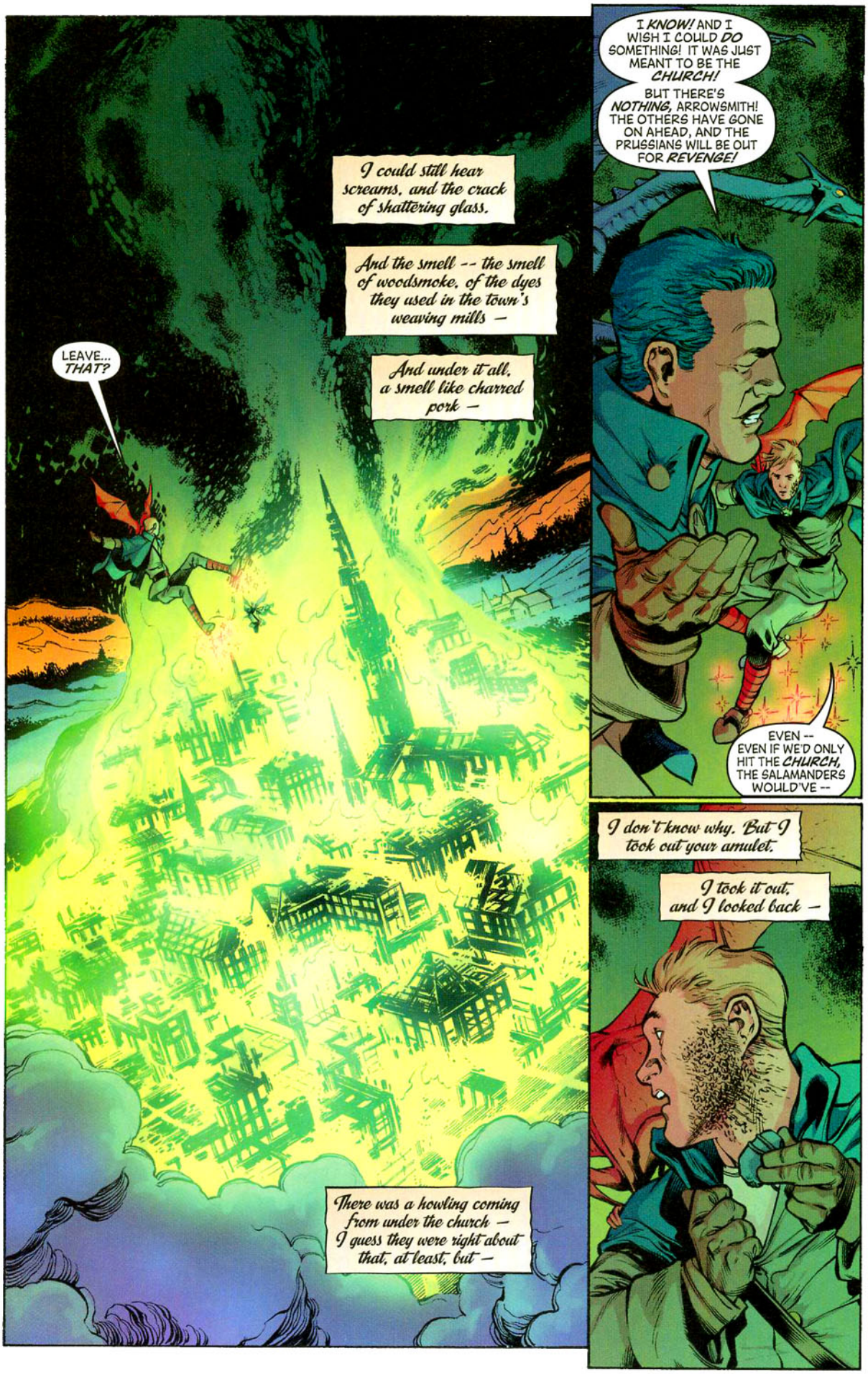
I tried to think – what could I do, how could I stop this?
Maybe my crossbow bolts could blast a path through the flames, give those poor people a way to safety. But –
HOLD ON, KID! I'VE GOT YOU -- I'LL CARRY YOU TO --
UHH!
My head swam – my vision blurred –


I think I was just dazed, never fully unconscious – it was so hot –
CH!CH! CH!
It was Hilda who snapped me out of it – she wanted to leave –
But I couldn't concentrate yet, couldn't form the words of the flight-spell –

I wondered – was this what our wizards meant to happen? Did things just get out of control?
Did it make a difference?
We were supposed to be the good ones. The righteous ones. The ones who didn't do things like this. That's what they told us.
But I saw --
And I saw –
OH DEAR GOD --
I -- I HELPED MAKE THIS HAPPEN. I DID THIS --

CH! CH! CH!
GO, HILDA -- FLY AWAY -- SAVE YOURSELF --
The flames roared around me. I couldn't think, couldn't breathe — and I saw shadows, shapes —
For a moment —
— they were the people of Holbrück — dying, accusing —
Then laughing faces — hungry faces —
And then the flames parted, and I knew —
SNFFF
KOFF
— knew I was going to die —
AAAHH!

HHHH?
HH!
COME ON, LAD!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR A NAP! FLY!
FLY!
BLAST IT, YOUR DRAGON'S HERE, YOU'RE CONSCIOUS -- I SAID FLY, DAMN YOU!
CH! CH!
My lungs felt seared — my face hurt so much —
But I remembered the words, the thoughts, the gestures —
AVEUS DRACONUS
THERE! GOOD! NOW LET'S GO!
YOU MEAN JUST -- JUST --
-- LEAVE?


I KNOW! AND I WISH I COULD DO SOMETHING! IT WAS JUST MEANT TO BE THE CHURCH!
BUT THERE'S NOTHING, ARROWSMITH! THE OTHERS HAVE GONE ON AHEAD, AND THE PRUSSIANS WILL BE OUT FOR REVENGE!
EVEN -- EVEN IF WE'D ONLY HIT THE CHURCH, THE SALAMANDERS WOULD'VE --
I could still hear screams, and the crack of shattering glass.
And the smell -- the smell of woodsmoke, of the dyes they used in the town's weaving mills —
And under it all, a smell like charred pork —
LEAVE... THAT?
There was a howling coming from under the church — I guess they were right about that, at least, but —
I don't know why. But I took out your amulet.
I took it out, and I looked back —

And the smoke -- it rose dark and thick, rolling in on itself like something solid --
And in the smoke --
THE GODS! ROCKY'S GODS -- THE GODS OF THE NORTH!
FOXE -- DO YOU SEE THEM?
SEE WHO? FLETCHER --

They weren't what had been in that church. I knew that.

They looked — all at once, they were wise and old and terribly, terribly sad. And they turned, and I knew more —

THEY'RE GOING -- LEAVING THIS REALM. LEAVING FOREVER...

FLETCHER! THE CLOAKING SPELL'S GONE! DAMN IT, MAN!

The amulet went hot, then cold. Maybe it was just an illusion — soot in my eye — but maybe it was the amulet, the salamander's touch —

LET'S GO!

A-ALL RIGHT --

We headed west —

— but didn't make it far, before —

FOXE!

PRUSSIANS, EH? I KNEW IT!
BREAK OFF, FLETCHER -- YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO FIGHT! HEAD WEST -- I'LL HOLD THEM OFF, THEN LEAD THEM A MERRY--
NO -- NO, I CAN --

But I couldn't. I was still too shaky. I moved too slowly, too sluggishly, almost like I was asleep. One of them flashed by me –

NNH!

And as I fell, and my vision went dark again, all I could feel was gratitude.
Gratitude that it was ending this swiftly –
CHH! CH!

– when for what I'd done, I deserved so much worse –
Next: ASHES, BLOOD AND DUST

Arrowsmith
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ARROWSMITHMAIL@AOL.COM

Ludovic L'Enfant
ludovic.lenfant@wanadoo.fr

I just read the letter page from *Arrowsmith* #3 and for my part I was very happy to see some French in the dialogue of #1. I know the work of M. Pacheco transmits what M. Busiek wanted to say but it was really fun to read a comic book with French within.

The subject of World War One is part of history and the way M. Busiek mixes it with a world full of magic, it is really the creation of a new world with characters who are so well described! The artwork is beautiful and the inks and the colors just make it better and better.

It's a wonderful story both of you are telling and I just wanted to thank you for that.

Best regards from France.

PS for Mister Busiek: *JLA/Avengers* rocks!

PS for Mister Pacheco: Why are you just doing the covers for *JSA*? *JSA/JLA* was so beautiful!

Thanks for the kind words on JLA/Avengers. As for Carlos and the JSA—hey, he's got to have time for Arrowsmith, right? Still, those fans who want to see his work inside DCU titles as well will be glad to hear that he's drawing a 6-issue Superman/Batman arc before plunging into the next Arrowsmith mini.

Don't miss it!

Lee Gaston
toast62496@yahoo.com

I wanted to write and tell you what a great series *Arrowsmith* has turned out to be. I have been a long time comic book reader, I love mythology and I served my country in the U.S. Army 7th Infantry Division. This book has been anything and everything that I could ask for in a comic book. Great characters, wonderful art, keeps you amazed every time you turn the page, and an original, wonderful take on World War I and how it affected the entire world.

In #2 when Jonathan and his date are coming back from the Statue of Liberty he says, "Unnerving when she shifts position though..." Is that implying that the Statue is alive in some way? That would be the greatest idea of all time! To think that the Statue of Liberty is there, alive, and looking over all of her citizens.

I have to say it again, wonderful job so far. I can't wait for next issue, and I'm recommending *Arrowsmith* to everyone.

LoneCubb@aol.com

I'm thoroughly in love with this series. That's right, ring those wedding bells, in love! I really enjoy the entire Harry Potter-ish kind of war tale (Harry Potter in a good way honestly!). The entire concept is just a blast and I can't get enough of it. I love the twists (like the Statue of Liberty holding the sword and the prejudices against the mystic people). You guys have put in a lot of thought into this project, and it clearly shows. I can also really appreciate the intertwining history that you have presented in the story after just learning about WWI in World Civ. A great read and educational!

A few things...since it seems a couple of Arrowsmith's friends have died, I was thinking it may be cool if he could kinda adopt his teammates' dragons (along with the wrappings of their boots as well) to constantly present the reminder of the harsh realities of war in future issues. Also, I was wondering what happened to the glowing circle discs that used to be underneath the Aero Corps feet. I saw them in the preview that DC put out, and I thought they were really neat looking. But it seems you guys decided at the last minute to replace the glowing discs with a sphere of glow underneath their feet. Is this to stress the fact that flying isn't exactly easy (whereas, if there were discs under their feet, it would simply look like all they had to do was stand)?

Other than that, I thought that an appropriate title for your fan letters page would be *Air Mail*. Keep up the excellent work everybody, I'm looking to stay in for the long haul for this series and any other mini-series that may come out of it.

Fletcher wouldn't be able to adopt Jonathan's and Mitch's dragonets—they've been sent back to training camps to be bonded to new airmen. But it's a nice thought. As for the flight effects—we played around with the look of it until we all liked the result. I had originally envisioned an arrowhead shape (more "arrow" references, go figure), Carlos had a roughly-spherical glow in mind, and it took until the San Diego Con before we could sit down together and sketch out ideas.

And I never thought we really needed a lettercolumn title—just sending mail to Arrowsmith seemed fine to me, in much the same way that Time and TV Guide don't have special names for their lettercols. Maybe it's just because Arrowsmith feels different from most superhero comics that I didn't feel the need to follow the pattern. But if the readership feels differently, I'm flexible—let me know, hm?

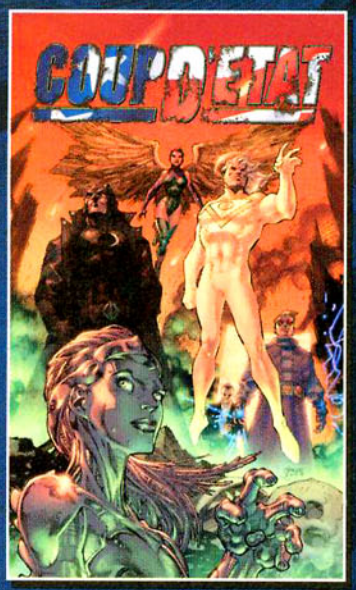
Next issue—the finale, at least for this mini. Will Fletcher survive? Even if he does, how will he be changed? A fateful clash behind enemy lines will tell the tale.

—Kurt Busiek

THE STORMFRONT
JANUARY 2004

After being sworn to secrecy for months, I am excited to finally announce some of our big plans for early 2004. Come this February, with the release of the COUP D'ETAT limited series, the WildStorm Eye of the Storm (EOTS) line will do something most fans would have expected from this eclectic and offbeat line. We're doing an Event with a capital E, and it marks the first time we will have skipped the release of our regular EOTS line of books for an entire month (at least, intentionally ^_^).

Instead of our normal lineup of SLEEPER, WILDCATS VERSION 3.0, STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES and THE AUTHORITY in February 2004, we will be releasing an entire 4-part mini-series called COUP D'ETAT, one issue per week. The first chapter will mark my return (albeit short) to many of the characters I brought into this universe and gives me a chance to work with one of the most talented new voices in mainstream comics today; namely, Ed Brubaker. Ed's a writer who has done it all. Superlatively.



From his highly personal indie *Lowlife* to his thrilling runs on BATMAN and DETECTIVE to his revitalizing work on CATWOMAN to his critically acclaimed co-stewardship on GOTHAM CENTRAL on to his taut, edgy work on SLEEPER—my personal fave (yeah, I'm biased—sue me!)—Ed brings a new, wholly fresh take to every project he brings to life, and it was very cool finally getting to collaborate with him. Our chapter focuses on every superhero team's fantasy. To take over the world and make it a finer place. How the rest of the superpowered and super-empowered denizens of the WildStorm Universe react to the Authority's coup is what makes this Event a thrilling widescreen epic.

No slouches in the talent department, current STORMWATCH writer Micah Ian Wright and hot up-and-comer artist Carlos D'Anda take on chapter two focusing how StormWatch deals with the Authority's Coup d'Etat. Chapter three, written by the always surprising and offbeat Joe Casey and multitalented artist Alé Garza, offers an intimate look into how the always mysterious, always intriguing Wildcats deal with the new status quo. The always-dangerous Scotsman Robbie Morrison works with the amazing Whilce Portacio to wrap up the event in one tidy package for any new readers who may be jumping onboard for the ride.

What's most exciting about this event though, are the repercussions it will have across the entire Eye of the Storm line after February and how all the characters will have to deal with the decisions they made during the Coup.

I'm also proud and thrilled to announce that out of this event, we will be launching what many longtime WildStorm fans have been clamoring for—the newest take on WETWORKS. WETWORKS is a fresh re-envisioning of the classic characters written by nefariously talented Mike Carey and drawn by the co-creator himself, Whilce Portacio, and will be an ongoing addition to the solid EOTS line.

The revolutions come to your local comic book store February 2004. I'll see you then!

Best, JIM LEE

On a plane over Dallas, Texas

UPCOMING RELEASES

WILDSTORM

Robotech: Invasion #1

Thundercats: Hammer-Hand's Revenge #4

Thundercats: The Return TPB

The Saga of Seven Suns HC

Global Frequency: Planet Ablaze

EYE OF THE STORM

The Authority #9

Stormwatch: Team Achilles #19

Wildcats Version 3.0

CLIFFHANGER!

Arrowsmith #6

Kamikaze #4

ABC

Promethea #29

Ask WILDSTORM

Ever have a question about WildStorm or one of our imprints? Maybe you're curious where a character first appeared? Or what kind of food Jim Lee likes to eat at 2:00 AM after putting an issue to bed? Well, now's your chance to find out. E-mail us your questions at askwildstorm@aol.com and we will pick one or two every month to answer. Questions can be directed towards the Editorial department or to a specific creator. Okay, play nice!

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• CONTINUING THE SAGA OF •

Arrowsmith

• CHAPTER SIX •
TOMORROW'S DAWN

It has been only six months since young Fletcher Arrowsmith ran away from home, dreaming of glory, to become an airman — a flying soldier-wizard — and fight in the Great War. In that time, he has lost comrades, including his boyhood friend Jonathan, and gained others — Grace Hilliard, a spirited ambulance driver, Rocky, a rock-troll from home, and Dennison Foxe, his flight leader.

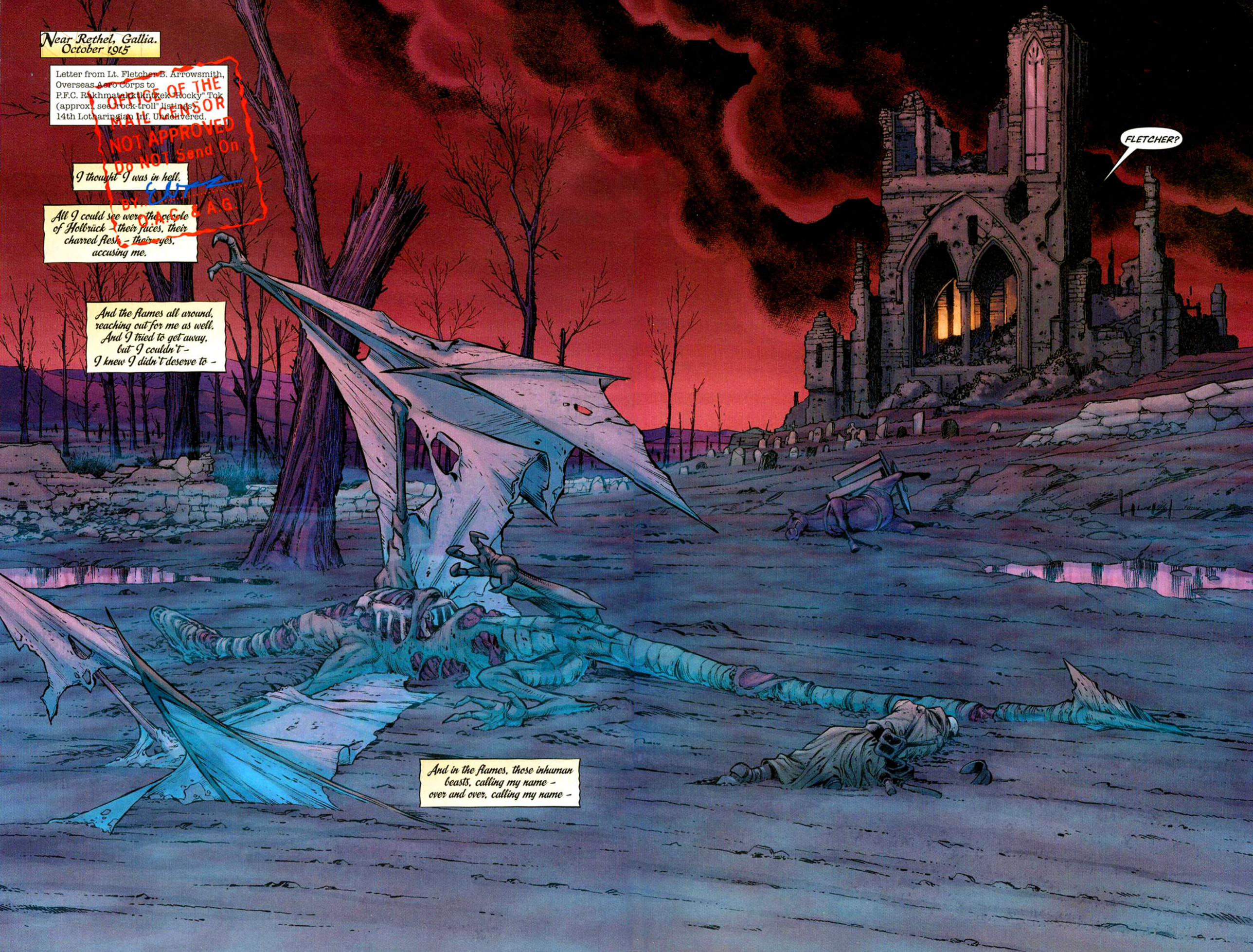
Recently, Fletcher's squadron was chosen to use a new weapon against a Prussian arms-research center in the town of Holbrück. But the weapon — cylinders containing salamanders, fire elementals that blazed to life on release — proved uncontrollable, and Holbrück, including its civilian population, was consumed. Fletcher, downed briefly, faced one of the salamanders, and may have been protected by an amulet given to him by Rocky, an amulet empowered by the gods of the north.

Saved from the conflagration by Capt. Foxe, Fletcher experienced a vision: the departure of the gods of the north, as they left this realm forever in sadness and disgust for what the world has become.

Striking for home, Foxe and a shaken Fletcher were attacked by Prussians, and Fletcher, wounded, fell...

BY KURT BUSIEK & CARLOS PACHECO
JESÚS MERINO, INKER • ALEX SINCLAIR, COLOR ARTIST
RICHI & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE, LETTERING
KRISTY QUINN, ASS'T EDITOR • SCOTT DUNBIER, EDITOR
LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS, ALTERNITY CONSULTANT
COMICRAFT'S JG ROSHELL, DESIGN

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE ADVENTURER & HERO


Near Rethel, Gallia.
October 1915
Letter from Lt. Fletcher B. Arrowsmith, Overseas Aero Corps to P.F.C. Rakhmatekkhuntkek "Rocky" Tok (approx., see "rock-troll" listings) 14th Lotharingian Inf. Uncovered.
OFFICE OF THE MAIL CENSOR
NOT APPROVED
Do NOT Send On
BY: O.A.C. & A.G.
I thought I was in hell.
All I could see were the people of Holbrück – their faces, their charred flesh – their eyes, accusing me.
And the flames all around, reaching out for me as well. And I tried to get away, but I couldn't – I knew I didn't deserve to –
And in the flames, those inhuman beasts, calling my name – over and over, calling my name –
FLETCHER?

NN... HOL' ON, KID... GOT YOU...CARRY YOU TO...
FLETCHER, CAN YOU HEAR ME? WAKE UP...
NN? WH...?
FLETCHER?
I had a panicky moment when I saw her face – yours too, Rocky. I was damned, I could accept that. I'd earned it. But the two of you?
Then the world stopped being blurry, and my chest just hurt...
GRACE? ROCKY?
WHA... WHAT'S GOING ON? HOW DID WE...?
EASY, FLETCHER. YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.
HERE. TRY SOME SOUP, IT'LL WARM YOU.
YOU WERE WOUNDED. OUR MAGE HEALED THE WORST OF IT, BUT YOU'LL STILL NEED TIME FOR YOUR RIBS AND LUNGS TO FULLY KNIT.
IF CAPTAIN FOXE HADN'T GOTTEN YOU HERE, THOUGH...
F-FOXE?! HE -- I --
I looked at him –

– but in his eyes – he was seeing what I was seeing, I think.
He looked away.

WHOA DERE, VLETCH-BOY. IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, BUT YOU GOT TO LIE DOWN, REST.
NO...I'M OKAY, I CAN STAND. I'M JUST...I'M STIFF. I NEED TO STRETCH, TO WALK...
OGAY, DEN...

...I SHOW YOU AROUN'.

WE ABOUD EIGHT MILE BEHIND PRUSSIAN LINES. WE WAS ON DIS SORTIE, AN' DE PRUSSIANS GO BERSERK, ATTACKIN' EVERYWHERE, LIKE DE MADMEN.
SOME CRUD ABOUT US BURNIN' A WHOLE TOWN, DEY SAY...
... JUS' SOME OF DAT PROPAGANDA STUFF, I BET.
ANYWAY, WE GET CUT OFF WHEN GRACE AN' HER AMBULANCE SHOW UP, AN' WE VIND PLACE TO HIDE HERE...
... AND DE OFFICERS DEY SAY WE DON'T RISK MOVIN' 'TIL DAWN. GOOD T'ING, TOO, 'CAUSE DAT VOXE HE BARELY MAKE IT HERE, YOU KNOW?
IF HE TRY TO GO DE WHOLE WAY...
UH, ROCKY...
HEY, HERE SOME OF DE GUYS! DIS IS HENRIK ROOSENDAAL -- HE A LOT'ARINGIAN VELLA FROM UTRECHT.
'ALLO.
DIS HERE IS WILLOWBARK. HE A DRYAD, UP FROM TUSCANY. WHAT HE DOIN' WIT' US, I DUNNO.
BUONA SERA, YOUNG SIR.
AN' HERE DE COMPANY MAGE DAT HEAL YOU, LUCIEN CASTEAU. HE CHUST A KID -- SOUS-LOOT'NANT -- BUT WE LIKE HIM OGAY ANYWAY.
IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU HEALING WELL, LIEUTENANT ARROWSMITH. GREETINGS.
UH... AH...
...HI.
I didn't know what to say to them – to any of them –

-- LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THE WAR BEIN' OVER, YAH. BACK TO ME OLD LIFE. THEY PUT OUT THE MILK, YOU FIX THE SHOES, YOU GET THE MILK.
A FAIR TRADE IT IS, AN' HONEST WORK. THERE YOU GO, DARLIN'...
AND...IT'S SOMETHING YOU ENJOY, RAKO?
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING ELSE?
WELL, IT'S THE WAY IT WORKS, INNIT? 'SWHAT MY PA DID, AN' HIS PA BEFORE.
MIND YOU, I GOT MY EYE ON NEW TERRITORY WHEN I GET BACK. THEY'RE BUILDIN'. MORE HOUSES MEANS MORE SHOES. MORE SHOES, MORE MILK.
JUST THE THING TO START A FAMILY ON, YAH?
AN' THERE'S THIS REDCAP LASSIE I KNOW, THE SWEETEST YOU'LL --
AHH --
AHH --
DOWN!
GET DOWN --

"--WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!"

AT 'EM, BOYS!
FOR GALLIA AND FREEDOM! LOOK LIVELY!

The battle – you know what it was like, of course. You were there. But it was new to me. Until then, I'd only fought in the air, in flight –
– and there's something about that, for all the chaos. Something more...I don't know.
Fair. Personal.
And then there'd been Holbrück.

I couldn't help wondering about all those angry faces that night.
DAMN!
OUT OF PRANA-BOLTS! NO TIME FOR ANOTHER SPELL --
How many of them had family in Holbrück?
Children, aunts, anyone?

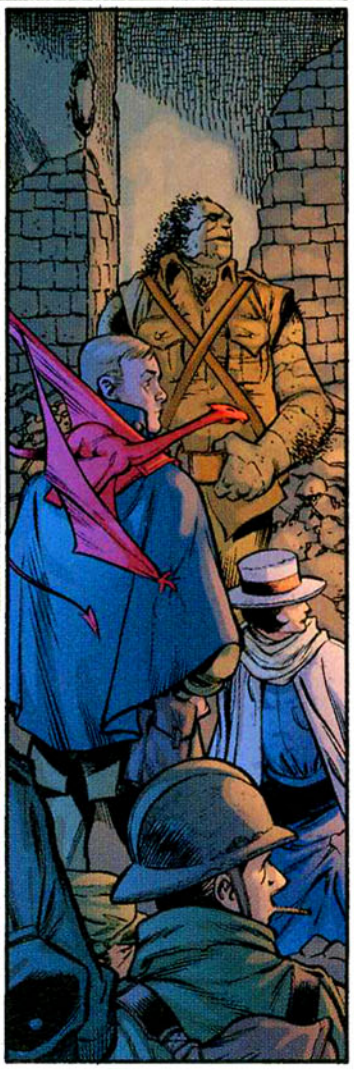
That didn't stop me fighting, of course --
NNUH!
AHH!
AHH!
WH--?
AHH!

BLAM BLAM BLAM
AHH!
AHH!
CHH!!!!
We just – that's what we do, isn't it? They attack. We fight back. They fight back.
And then it's all about fighting back, and it doesn't really matter how it started any more, is it? And it spreads and spreads...
GRACE!
GRACE, GET DOWN! YOU'RE --
GRACE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! THAT WEREWOLF -- HE COULD HAVE KILLED YOU!
GRACE, YOU'RE IN THE AMBULANCE CORPS! YOU'RE A NON-COMBATANT! YOU'RE NOT TRAINED, YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO --
THEY KILLED -- THEY JUST -- HIS FACE, HIS HEAD --
GET SOME COVER! AND STAY THERE, UNTIL THIS IS --
HE ONLY -- HE ONLY WANTED MORE SHOES TO FIX -- !
-- OH.
I GUESS... IT'S OVER.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, GRACE?
I CAN -- I CAN DO THIS.
IT'S ALL RIGHT -- I'LL JUST --
I'LL BE --

UH- OH.
HM?
WH--?

I...AM SORRY, BUT --
THERE IS A VAMPIRE SQUAD. NEARBY, TO THE SOUTHWEST. IT IS HARD TO GET A FIX ON THEM, BUT FROM THEIR MOVEMENTS...THEY'RE HUNTING.
AND THEY ARE COMING THIS WAY.



YOU HAVE ALL FOUGHT BRAVELY AND WELL. BUT WE CANNOT WITHSTAND ANOTHER ATTACK TONIGHT. NOT BY VAMPIRES.
THEY NEED TO BE DECOYED -- LED AWAY FROM OUR POSITION, AND SWIFTLY.
I'LL GO NOW.

HUH?
CAPTAIN FOXE -- NO! YOU CAN'T! YOU'D NEVER --
I'LL GO. I'M PRETTY FAST, AND I CAN --
NO, FLETCHER.

YOU'RE VERY GOOD. BUT YOU WOULDN'T LAST TEN SECONDS. I'VE GOT A FEW TRICKS THEY HAVEN'T SEEN, TRUST ME.
BESIDES, I'M RANKING OFFICER HERE. IT'S MY DECISION.
BUT SIR -- YOU SAVED ME! PULLED ME OUT OF --
AH-AH! DON'T NAME THAT TOWN, LAD. BAD LUCK TO DWELL ON IT.

IF I'M NOT BACK BY MORNING, MOVE OUT AT FIRST LIGHT. THE PRUSSIANS ALREADY KNOW WE'RE HERE, SO IT'S NOT SAFE.
STAY OUT OF SIGHT, MAKE IT BACK HOME.
NO HEROICS -- YOUR JOB IS TO GET HOME, GOT IT?

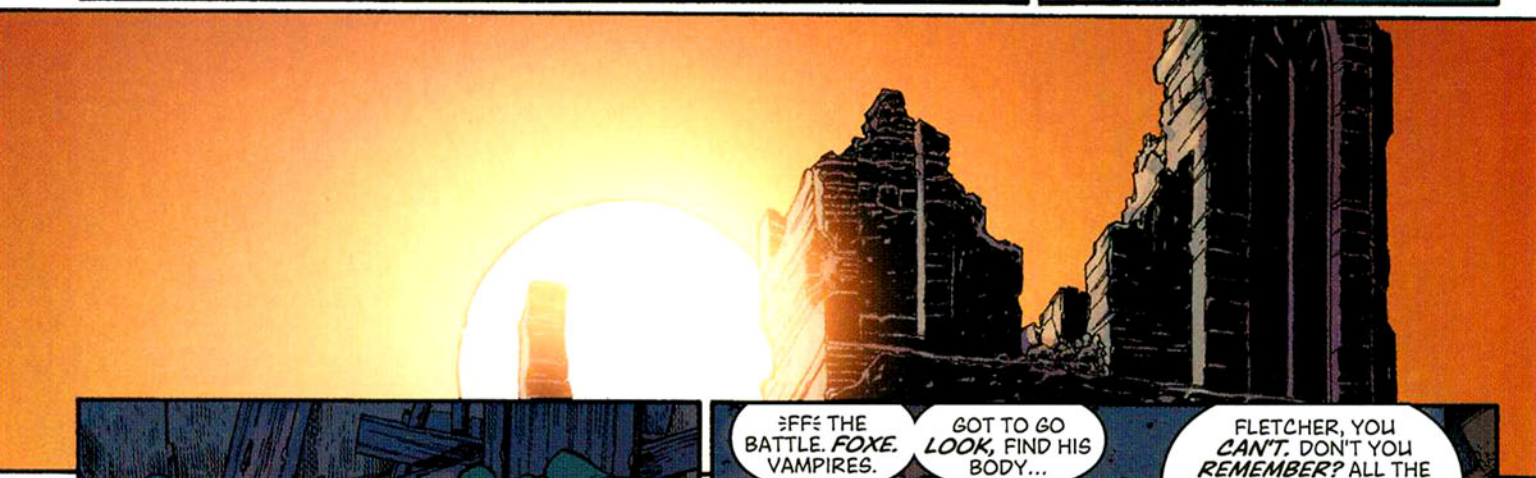
YESSIR.
YES.

THE SQUAD...IT'S STILL MOVING. STILL COMING CLOSER. CLOSER...
NO, WAIT. THEY ARE WHEELING, CHANGING DIRECTION...
KIAAAAIIII
THEIR PREY-SCREAM. THEY MUST HAVE SIGHTED HIM.
HE'S LEADING THEM ON A CHASE. INTO THE WOODS. BUT IT'S A FULL SQUAD -- THIRTY OF THEM --
THEY ARE SPREADING OUT, FLANKING -- VERDUIVELD!
WHAT?
MILITARY VAMPIRES ARE MYSTICALLY "TAGGED." I NOW HAVE A READING. THEY'RE OURS. BULGARIANS, OUT OF CHÂLONS-SUR-MAME.
THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO ATTACK ALLIES. BUT SOMETIMES THEY GET LOOSE, SLIP THEIR HANDLING SPELLS...
WAIT. WHAT IS...?
DAMN.
KIAAAAIIII

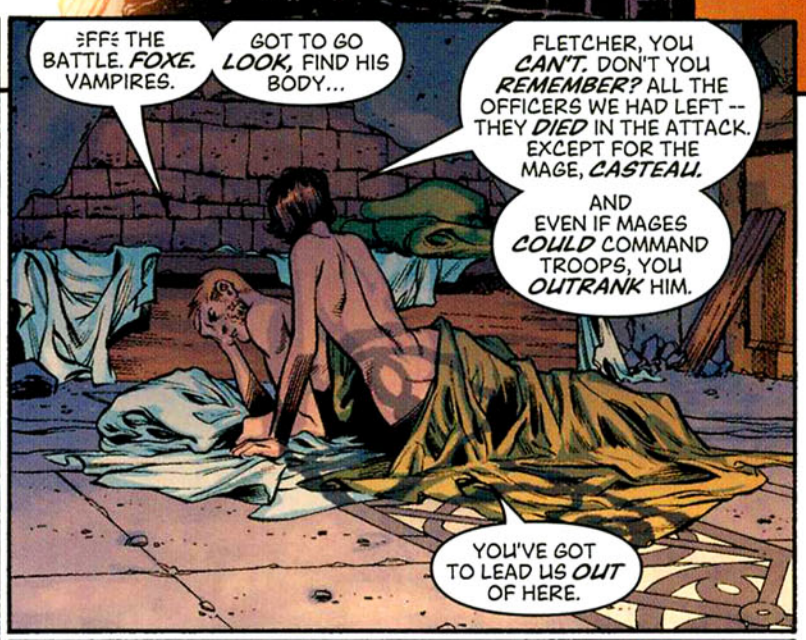
FLETCHER.
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WENT.
I'M SORRY, GRACE. I JUST... I WANT TO BE ALONE RIGHT NOW.
I KNOW HOW YOU MUST FEEL. THIS WAR -- RAKO -- IT'S SO -- SO --
YOU'RE SICK ABOUT FOXE, WE ALL ARE. BUT HE DID WHAT HE DID FOR US. HE WAS A GOOD MAN. A GOOD MAN, JUST LIKE YOU ARE --
NO.
NO, WE'RE NOT.
THAT TOWN? THE TOWN THE PRUSSIANS SAY WE BURNED? WHY THEY'RE SO CRAZED?
WE DID IT, GRACE. WE DID IT.
IT WAS A WEAPONS CENTER WE WERE SENT AFTER, UNDER A CHURCH -- BUT WE DROPPED SALAMANDERS ON THEM, AND THEY JUST -- THEY BURNED --
OH, FLETCHER --
AND WHEN ONE OF THE JARS BURST -- THE SALAMANDERS GOT GOODHEART AND LOGAN --
WE JUST DROPPED THEM. ALL OVER TOWN. WOMEN, CHILDREN, HOMES -- WE BURNED THEM, GRACE. BURNED THEM ALL. WE JUST --
SHH, SHHH. YOU DIDN'T MEAN TO -- YOU WERE JUST TRYING TO --
ROCKY'S GODS -- THE GODS OF THE NORTH -- THEY'VE TURNED AWAY, TURNED THEIR BACK ON US, IT'S OUR FAULT --
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S NOT YOU. IT'S JUST THE WAR. JUST THIS DAMNED, STINKING, VILE WAR --
I DIDN'T -- THIS WASN'T WHAT I --
I KNOW, I KNOW.
IT'S NOT YOU, NOT ME, NOT ANY OF US. IT'S THIS WAR, THAT'S ALL. IT DEVOURS US -- CHANGES US.

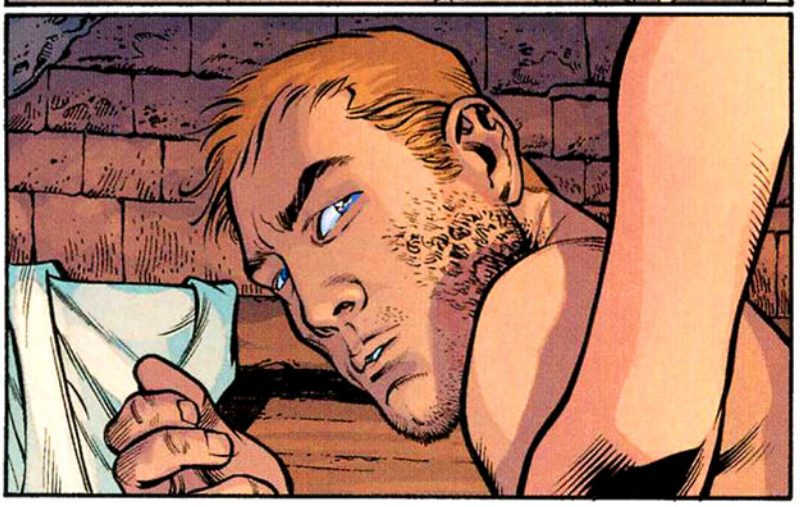
NNNNNNH!
GRACE, I --
I NEED --
I KNOW.
OH GOD, I KNOW --
I felt so lost, so overwhelmed -
I needed to touch, to feel -
To remind myself what life meant - that it was real, that it mattered -
That we were both alive. Lost, drowning - but not alone -

AH-AH. ON N'PASSE PAS.
MAIS ROCKY -- J'ME CAILLE! ET J'AI UNE AUTRE COUVERTURE LÁ-DEDANS.
ALLEZ, J'EN AI JUSTE POUR UNE MINUTE...
PAS MAINTENANT.



FLETCHER?
FLETCHER, IT'S DAWN. YOU'VE GOT TO GET UP, GET READY.
NNNNN...

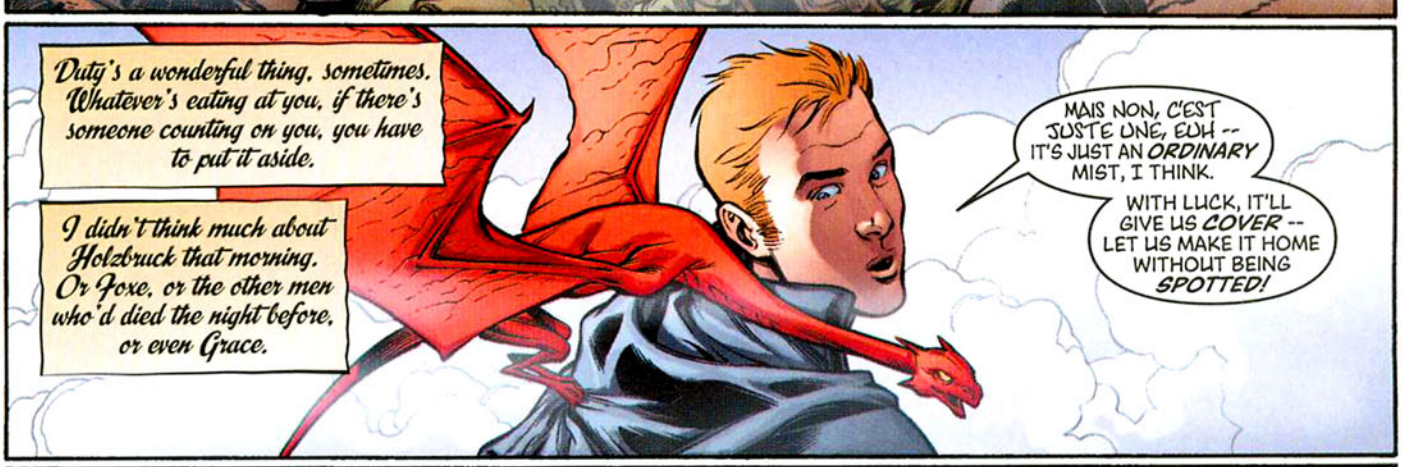

OFF THE BATTLE. FOXE. VAMPIRES.
GOT TO GO LOOK, FIND HIS BODY...
FLETCHER, YOU CAN'T. DON'T YOU REMEMBER? ALL THE OFFICERS WE HAD LEFT -- THEY DIED IN THE ATTACK. EXCEPT FOR THE MAGE, CASTEAU.
AND EVEN IF MAGES COULD COMMAND TROOPS, YOU OUTRANK HIM.
YOU'VE GOT TO LEAD US OUT OF HERE.



...CARRY THE PROVISIONS. WE'LL LEAVE THE BODIES, BUT CASTEAU'S LEFT A THAUMATIC BEACON SO WE CAN RECOVER THEM LATER.
I didn't want to do it.
Didn't want to have anyone depending on me. Didn't think I could manage it.

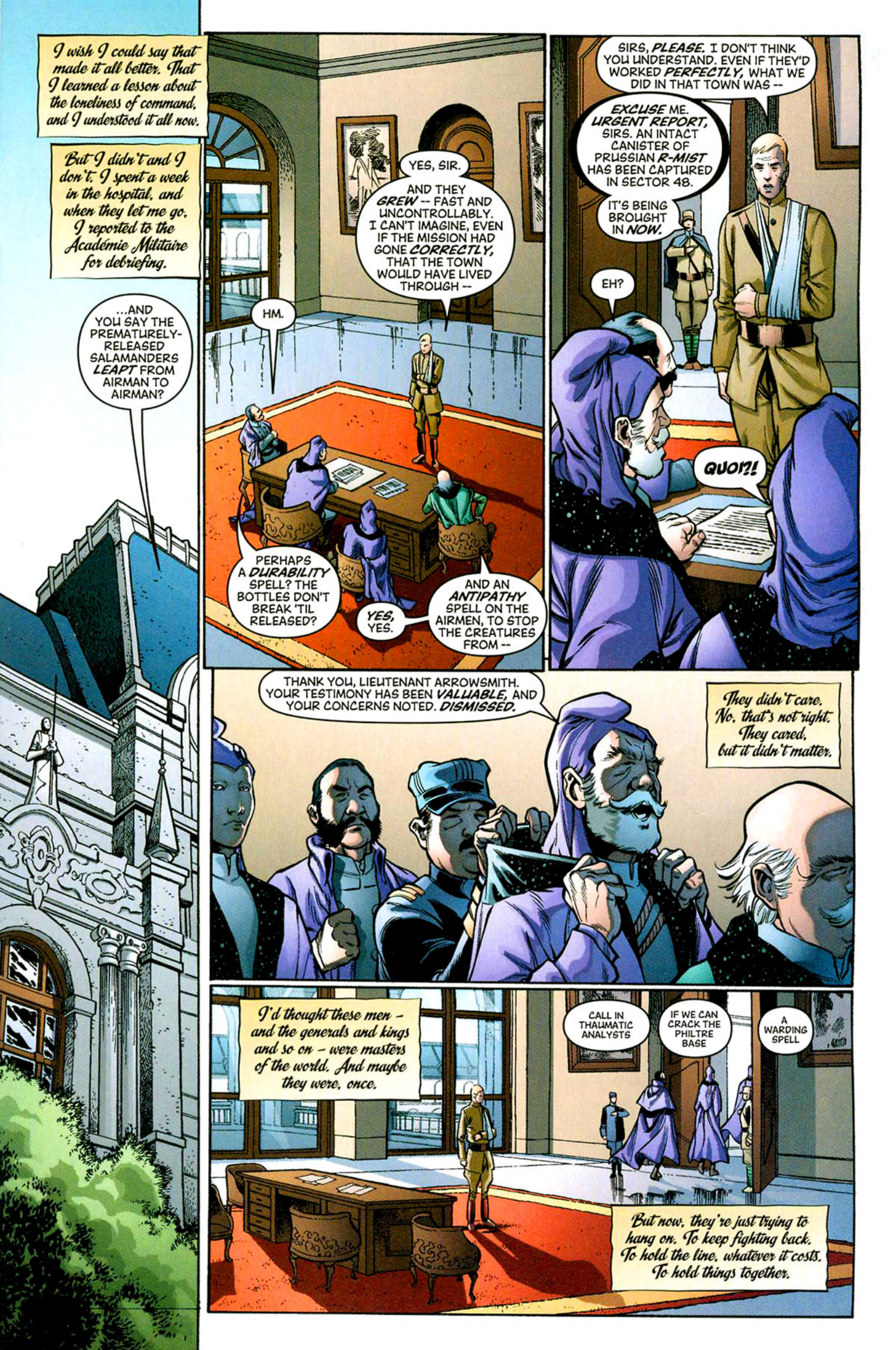
But I had no choice.
THIS WAY!
THERE'S COVER ABOUT SEVENTY YARDS AHEAD! STAY LOW -- BUT QUICK! QUICK!

I was all they had. And someone had to do it.
DE LA BRUME!
QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST? DE LA BRUME DÉVORANTE?
CETTE SALOPERIE DE BRUME PRUSIENNE QUI CHANGE LES HOMMES ES EN MONSTRES?


Duty's a wonderful thing, sometimes. Whatever's eating at you, if there's someone counting on you, you have to put it aside.
I didn't think much about Holzbruck that morning. Or Foxe, or the other men who'd died the night before, or even Grace.
MAIS NON, C'EST JUSTE UNE, EUH -- IT'S JUST AN ORDINARY MIST, I THINK.
WITH LUCK, IT'LL GIVE US COVER -- LET US MAKE IT HOME WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED!

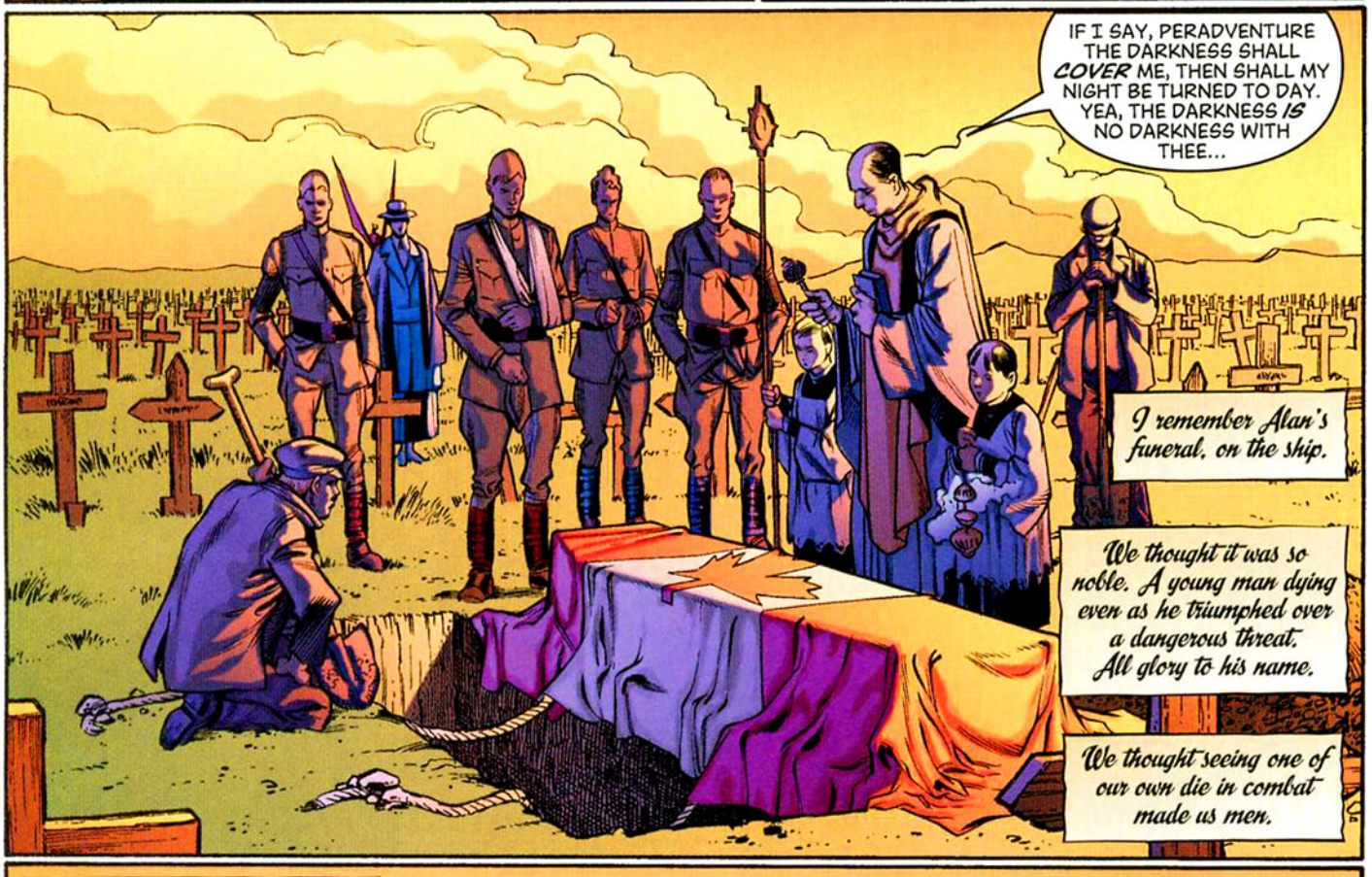
WE MUST BE ALMOST TO THE LINES.
MAYBE I CAN CARRY US OVER THE PRUSSIANS, ONE BY ONE, IF THE MIST HOLDS...
Don't screw up. That's what I thought.

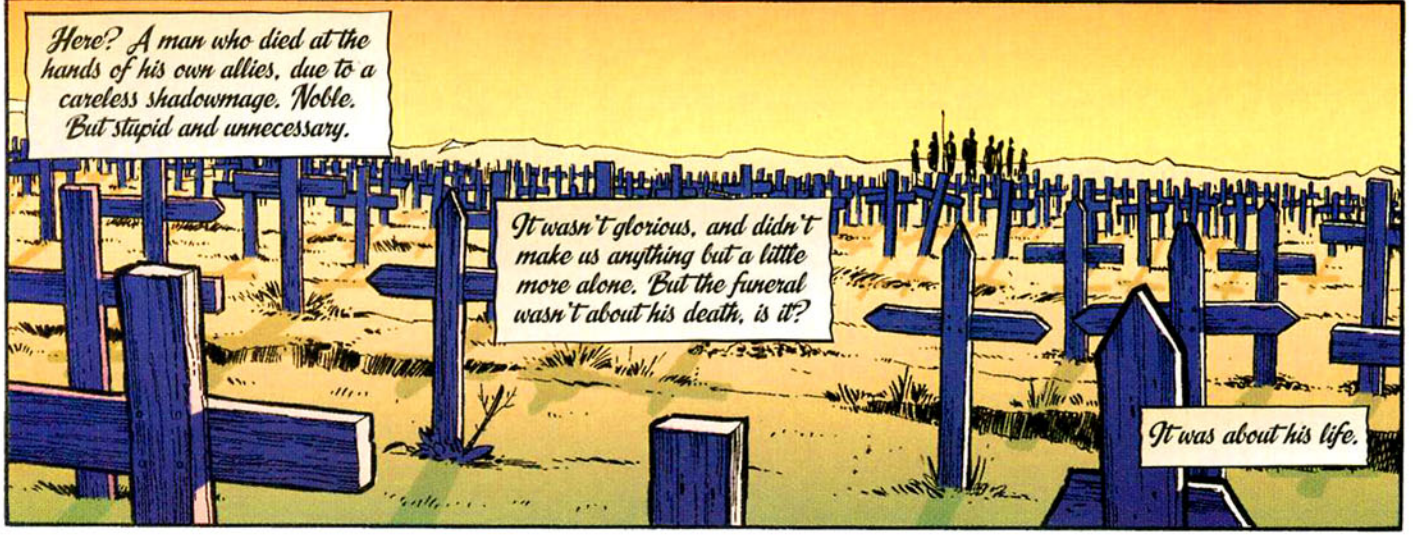
DES SOLDATS! LE PRUSSIENS!
OH NO! SPREAD OUT, EVERYONE! NO GROUPS, NO LARGE TARGETS!
LAY DOWN FIRE, THEN RETREAT TO --
I SAY...
...IS THAT A YANK VOICE I HEAR?
AND AN AIRMAN, NO LESS -- LEADING INFANTRY? THE LOTHARINGIAN 14TH, IS IT?
CAPTAIN DONALD THOMASON, THIRD ALBIONESE FUSILIERS, AT YOUR SERVICE. WE WERE TOLD YOU MIGHT BE IN THIS SECTOR.
And I didn't.
We must have made it through the lines in the fog. Missed the Prussians by the sheerest chance.
OH, FLETCHER, WE MADE IT!
YOU DID IT!
NOD TOO BAD, VLETCH-BOY. NOD TOO BAD...

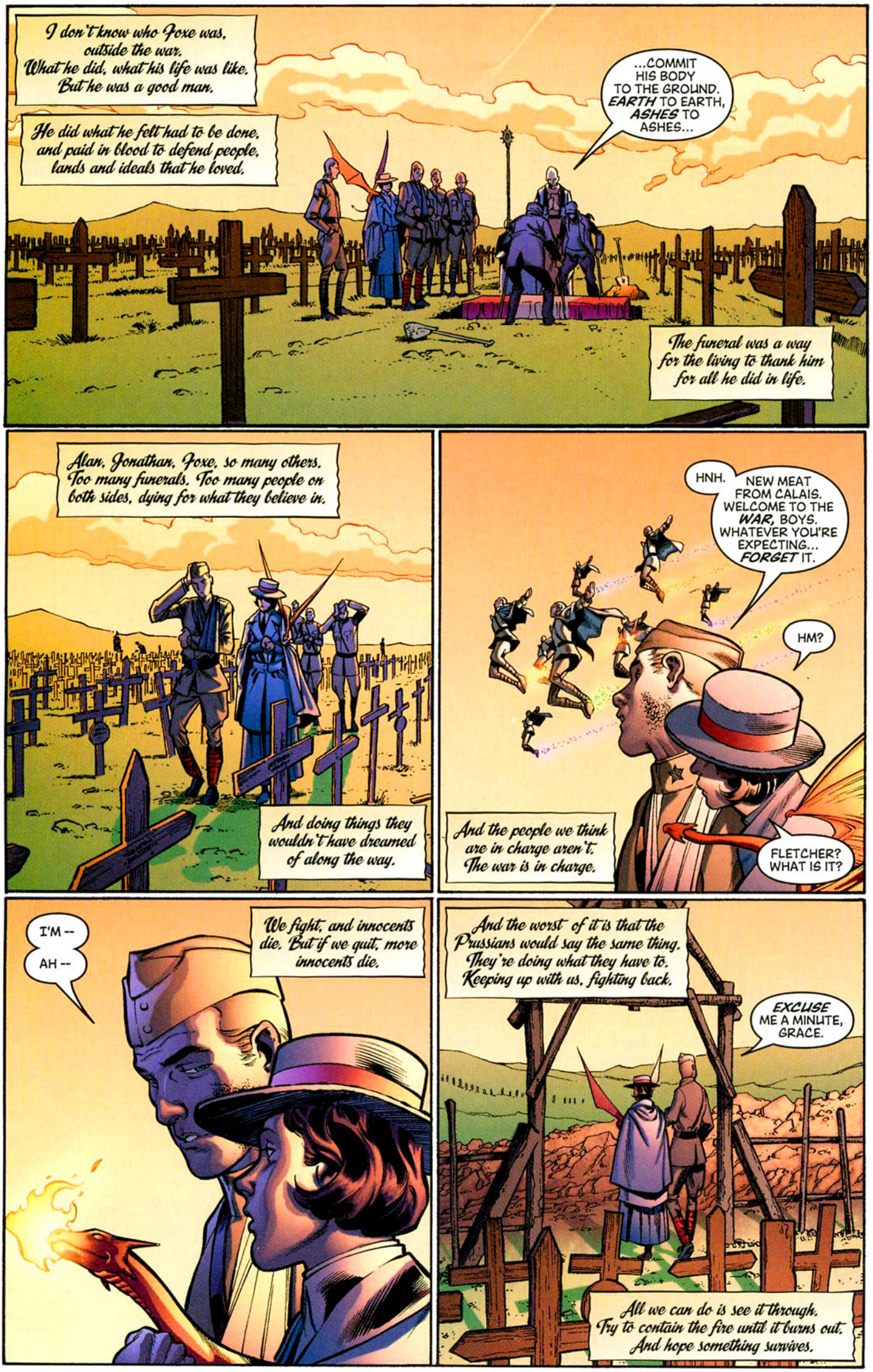

I wish I could say that made it all better. That I learned a lesson about the loneliness of command, and I understood it all now.
But I didn't and I don't. I spent a week in the hospital, and when they let me go, I reported to the Académie Militaire for debriefing.
...AND YOU SAY THE PREMATURELY-RELEASED SALAMANDERS LEAPT FROM AIRMAN TO AIRMAN?
HM.
YES, SIR. AND THEY GREW -- FAST AND UNCONTROLLABLY. I CAN'T IMAGINE, EVEN IF THE MISSION HAD GONE CORRECTLY, THAT THE TOWN WOULD HAVE LIVED THROUGH --
PERHAPS A DURABILITY SPELL? THE BOTTLES DON'T BREAK 'TIL RELEASED?
YES, YES.
AND AN ANTIPATHY SPELL ON THE AIRMEN, TO STOP THE CREATURES FROM --
SIRS, PLEASE. I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND. EVEN IF THEY'D WORKED PERFECTLY, WHAT WE DID IN THAT TOWN WAS --
EXCUSE ME. URGENT REPORT, SIRS. AN INTACT CANISTER OF PRUSSIAN R-MIST HAS BEEN CAPTURED IN SECTOR 48.
IT'S BEING BROUGHT IN NOW.
EH?
QUOI?!
THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT ARROWSMITH. YOUR TESTIMONY HAS BEEN VALUABLE, AND YOUR CONCERNS NOTED. DISMISSED.
They didn't care. No, that's not right. They cared, but it didn't matter.
I'd thought these men – and the generals and kings and so on – were masters of the world. And maybe they were, once.
CALL IN THAUMATIC ANALYSTS
IF WE CAN CRACK THE PHILTRE BASE
A WARDING SPELL
But now, they're just trying to hang on. To keep fighting back. To hold the line, whatever it costs. To hold things together.

To hold things together like Foxe had.
The Prussians recovered his body, and returned it.

It was honorable of them to do that. I wonder if they'd have been so eager to do it if they knew Foxe led the "Butchers of Holbrück."
I wonder if it matters.


IF I SAY, PERADVENTURE THE DARKNESS SHALL COVER ME, THEN SHALL MY NIGHT BE TURNED TO DAY. YEA, THE DARKNESS IS NO DARKNESS WITH THEE...
I remember Alan's funeral, on the ship.
We thought it was so noble. A young man dying even as he triumphed over a dangerous threat. All glory to his name.
We thought seeing one of our own die in combat made us men.

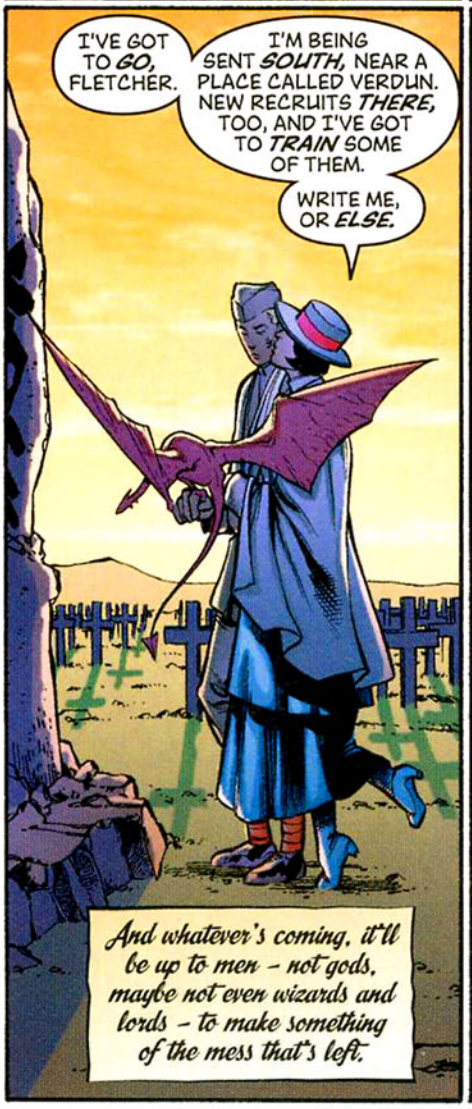

Here? A man who died at the hands of his own allies, due to a careless shadowmage. Noble. But stupid and unnecessary.
It wasn't glorious, and didn't make us anything but a little more alone. But the funeral wasn't about his death, is it?
It was about his life.


I don't know who Foxe was, outside the war. What he did, what his life was like. But he was a good man.
He did what he felt had to be done, and paid in blood to defend people, lands and ideals that he loved.
...COMMIT HIS BODY TO THE GROUND. EARTH TO EARTH, ASHES TO ASHES...
The funeral was a way for the living to thank him for all he did in life.
Alan, Jonathan, Foxe, so many others. Too many funerals. Too many people on both sides, dying for what they believe in.
And doing things they wouldn't have dreamed of along the way.
HNH.
NEW MEAT FROM CALAIS. WELCOME TO THE WAR, BOYS. WHATEVER YOU'RE EXPECTING... FORGET IT.
HM?
And the people we think are in charge aren't. The war is in charge.
FLETCHER? WHAT IS IT?
I'M --
AH --
We fight, and innocents die. But if we quit, more innocents die.
And the worst of it is that the Prussians would say the same thing. They're doing what they have to. Keeping up with us, fighting back.
EXCUSE ME A MINUTE, GRACE.
All we can do is see it through. Try to contain the fire until it burns out. And hope something survives.

Rocky's gods are gone. And maybe not just them. The whole world is changing.
Old ways are ending. New ways are being born.

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN HEAR ME. BUT THANK YOU.
AND I'M SORRY.

And whether that's good or bad, whether we're building a better future, or hell on Earth – we just don't know.
And we won't, until it's all over, and it's too late to fix anything.


I'VE GOT TO GO, FLETCHER.
I'M BEING SENT SOUTH, NEAR A PLACE CALLED VERDUN. NEW RECRUITS THERE, TOO, AND I'VE GOT TO TRAIN SOME OF THEM.
WRITE ME, OR ELSE.
And whatever's coming, it'll be up to men – not gods, maybe not even wizards and lords – to make something of the mess that's left.

GRACE!
HM?
I WILL. I'LL WRITE. TAKE CARE, ALL RIGHT?

If they can, at least.
I don't know what it'll be like, or when it'll happen –

– but I hope we all get a chance to find out.
And I hope that chance comes soon.
Your friend, Fletcher

FROM THE CAPTAIN'S DESK

And with that, we reach the end of the first Arrowsmith storyline, and take our leave of Fletcher and company, at least for a little while. But not forever – I've already started working out the plot for ARROWSMITH: BEHIND ENEMY LINES, which is at least tentatively planned to feature Fletcher on an espionage mission into Imperial Prussia, experiencing the tender mercies of a prisoner-of-war camp and learning more about the true nature of the war. Once Carlos finishes the SUPERMAN/BATMAN arc he's drawing, he'll be back to draw it, and with luck, we'll get the whole thing out on time this time!

I'd run your letters-of-comment on ARROWSMITH #4 here, but idiot that I am, I'm in a hotel room in Scottsdale, Arizona, and all the e-mail we received on #4 is carefully stashed in a file on my desktop on my computer at home, and alas, the deadlines won't wait.

So instead, I'll remind you that even though this is the last issue of this arc, you should feel free to let us know what you thought – we'll need something to fill the lettercols next time around, and trust me, you don't want to see me try to put together a WWI-era crossword puzzle.

A couple more bits of business...

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VANCOUVER, WA 98684-6991
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Every time we run any non-English dialogue, we get e-mails from people wanting to know what it said. Trust me, if it was important, we'd have translated it for you – generally, it's there to give you flavor and atmosphere, not critical information. But just in case you're sure you're missing something in the French, Italian and Flemish dialogue this issue, here's a rough translation:

```
PAGE SIX
Willowbark: Good evening, young sir.

AGE THIRTEEN
ucian:  What the devil -- ?

 AGE SIXTEEN
 cky:   Ah-ah.  Off-limits.
 ldier: But Rocky - it's cold!  I've got an
        extra blanket in there. It'll just be
        a minute...
Rocky:  Not now.

PAGE SEVENTEEN
Soldier: Mist!
Soldier: What is it?  A mist of ravening?  That
         damned Prussian mist that turns men into
         monsters?
Fletcher: No, no, it's just an, ah - it's just an
          ordinary mist, I think.

PAGE EIGHTEEN
Soldier: Soldiers!  The Prussians!
```

If you're curious about the dialogue in any other issue, or just want to discuss the series with other Arrowsmith-readers, drop by http://dcboards.warnerbros.com/web/topics.jsp?board=arrowsmith , the DC/Wildstorm ARROWSMITH message board. We'll be glad to see you!

FROM THE DESK

Next up for Arrowsmith is the ASTRO CITY/ARROWSMITH flip-book, coming your way in April. On the ARROWSMITH side, it'll feature the first printing of the "prelude" story we put online, to give readers a look at the series, plus sketchbook material and other goodies, while the ASTRO CITY side gives you another prelude – to the upcoming ASTRO CITY: THE DARK AGE epic, and other goodies from that series as well.

Check it out – you'll be glad you did!

And with that, we bid you all a fond farewell. We hope you've enjoyed your time in the trenches and airfields of Gallia, and look forward to seeing you on the next tour of duty. Until then, keep your ammo dry, and don't take any cursed centimes!

— Kurt & Carlos

THE STORMFRONT
MARCH 2004

Traditionally, this space is given to a writer or artist who's working on an upcoming WildStorm project as an opportunity to promote the individual book. This month, however, we at WildStorm wanted to take the opportunity to introduce and welcome two new members to the family.

Our first big hello goes out to the new penciller on one of the most critically acclaimed books on the market, WILDCATS VERSION 3.0. This artist extraordinaire is Duncan Rouleau! Hot off a recent stint on ACTION COMICS, Duncan looks forward to taking over art chores for issues 20-25, wrapping up the brutal "Coda War" storyline. "When I was approached about taking a shot at WILDCATS my stockbrokers, money managers and financial analysts all advised me with a resounding 'No,' " says Rouleau. "Usually I heed their counsel, chalking it up to the fact that they're much smarter than I am. But something in their eyes told me this 'No' was not born of fiscal prudence, but out of fear! And, what can I say...I needed to know why.... Wildcats are superheroes for our times; facing off against conglomerates, special interests, and those trickle-down ideologues that want to swallow up the citizen and spit out the consumer!

"Do I want to be part of a comic that takes the battle from Main Street to Wall Street? Hell yes!

"Join the resistance too, and buy this book!"

On the other side of the spectrum, the exceptional STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES welcomes a new penciller as well...the fabulous Clement Sauve! Following his well-received HUMAN DEFENSE CORPS miniseries for DC, Clement decided he hadn't quite had his fill of military action. "I'm thrilled to be working for WildStorm, especially on a book like STORMWATCH. It's one of the very few truly original titles out there, and I'm glad to get the chance to be part of it."

Be sure to give them a look when they hit the stands: STORMWATCH #21 goes on-sale 4/14 and WILDCATS VERSION 3.0 #20 is on-sale 4/21.

UPCOMING RELEASES

WILDSTORM

- The Authority V2 #10
- The Authority V2: Harsh Realities TPB
- Coup d'Etat: Afterword
- Kamikaze #6
- The Maxx Book Two TPB
- Planetary #19
- Planetary: Crossing Worlds TPB
- Reload/Mek TPB
- Robotech: Invasion #3
- Stormwatch: Team Achilles #20
- Wildcats Version 3.0 #19

ABC

- Tom Strong #25
- Promethea #29

Ask WILDSTORM

What happened to GLOBAL FREQUENCY #11 and #12? Are they cancelled? On the way? Will they be resolicited? And how long before TWO-STEP #2 and #3 show up?

Well, Daniel, I've got some good news—and some better news...GLOBAL FREQUENCY #11 and TWO-STEP #2 are in stores now! TWO-STEP #3 and GF #12 are coming soon. Keep your eye on this space....

Next question?
askwildstorm @aol.com

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